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Children's Services

CH Directorate,
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www.bolton.gov.uk

Dear Parent/Guardian

Family Holidays in Term Time

In Bolton, we want all our children and young people to achieve success and fulfil their potential, which is why regular attendance at school is important. This is not just because the law requires it, but because it is the best way that a child can make the most of their educational opportunities.

The vast majority of pupils in Bolton have an excellent attendance record and we recognise the efforts of so many parents to ensure their children attend school regularly and make the most of their educational opportunities

However, any time off school can be disruptive to a child's education and over the last year we have seen a worrying increase in the amount of absence from school for family holidays.

Whilst you may consider that a holiday will be educational, a family holiday in term time can be disruptive to a child's education. Your child will miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive. Children returning from a term time holiday are also unprepared for the lessons that build on the teaching they have missed, which can result in them under achieving. This is a situation that we all have a responsibility to avoid.

There is a strong link between school attendance and achieving good results for children. The Department for Education undertook extensive research of the link between absence and attainment. The study showed that as overall absence levels increase the average percentage of pupils achieving different levels of attainment at the end of KS2 and KS4 decreases. The analysis of the link between overall absence and attainment showed that, for each KS2 and KS4 measure, overall absence had a statistically significant negative link to attainment.

We appreciate there has been widespread disruption over the last couple of years due to the Covid Pandemic, however, the rules relating to school attendance resumed in September 2021. These rules make clear that a Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

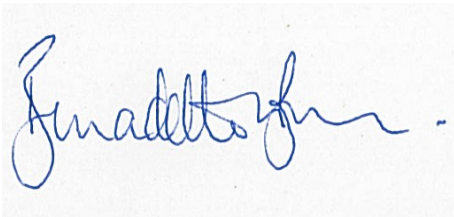
Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 states "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence".

Although there may be varying interpretations of what constitutes regular attendance, in 2017, in the case of *The Isle of White v Jon Platt*, the Supreme Court determined that regular attendance means 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'. As such if a child fails to attend on a day the school requires them to without approval from the Headteacher, this may constitute an offence.

Parents who take their children on an unauthorised holiday in term time could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. The amount of the fine is £60 (per parent per child) if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in prosecution for the original offence.

The School and Bolton Council will continue to work closely together to ensure our children can achieve the best possible outcomes. I trust you will support us in this matter and make every effort to plan your holidays around school closures.

Yours sincerely



Bernie Brown

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