



Dear Parent/Guardian

Meden School would like to make you aware of a new change in policy regarding school attendance specifically aimed at holidays taken during the academic term starting from January 2013. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude. Taking children out of the academic year for a holiday does not allow them to receive an efficient full-time education. The power to sanction the removal of children from their education for the purpose of a holiday resides solely with the Headteacher, who is required to give each case individual scrutiny but who has a duty, as Headteacher to apply the law. The criteria for authorisation are strictly defined and rest on the provision of reasons why the school holidays cannot be used, rather than reasons why the term-time should be used. Such special circumstances are normally related to military personnel on active service or close family bereavement. If the absence is not authorised by the Headteacher but still goes ahead, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

The government strongly urges schools not to sanction such absence from school and indeed nowadays classifies absence for holidays as truancy. Schools are also discouraged by the Targeted Support (who are responsible for attendance at County) from allowing pupils to leave school in term-time to take holidays. Attendance percentages, absenteeism and truancy are closely monitored by the County Targeted Support Service and, of course, OfSTED, and attendance statistics have to be returned to the DFE annually. The governors have also recently reviewed the attendance figures of the school and have agreed that in their view, holidays should not be taken in term-time but in the allocated school holiday time.

Therefore, as from January 2013 all holiday requests need to be submitted on a holiday request form which can be collected from the main school office or on the school website. Unless it is for exceptional circumstances holidays will not be authorised. If parents choose to take their child out of education for a holiday, then school will be obliged to refer the incident to Targeted Support who will then consider issuing a Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure the regular attendance of their child. The Penalty Notice is set at £120 and should be paid within 42 days of the date on which the notice starts. If the penalty is paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts the sum is reduced to £60.

We hope that you appreciate how crucial good school attendance is to your child's progress, achievement and life opportunities. We look forward to working with you to ensure that your child's attendance is the very best it can be, to give them the very best chances whilst in school and once they leave.

Yours sincerely

Ms E Sims