



Monday 3rd July 2017

Dear Parent/Carers

The Senior Leadership Team has been monitoring the attendance percentages of all the children in the school and this analysis has revealed that our school attendance percentage has decreased from the previous year. Whilst we are aware that during the autumn term, many of our children were absent from school due to a stomach bug, the rise in the number of days children being absent from school due to unauthorised holidays, has increased significantly.

Following the Isle of Wight Court Case, there has been a great deal of confusion with regard to pupils missing education for family holidays during term time. In September 2013 the Government decreed that, Head Teachers could not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time without 'exceptional circumstances'. On Thursday 6th April 2017 the Supreme Court upheld the ban on Parents taking their children out of school for family holidays during term time. Therefore the current regulations that allow Parent/Carers to be fined are:

- Penalty notices may be issued where there are 5 or more days of unauthorised absences within a six week period.
- Penalty notices may be issued for unauthorised leave of absence of 5 consecutive days.

During May and June 2017 the number of days learning lost, due to holidays equalled 290 days, which equates to 1450 hours of lost learning. We are very much aware of the vastly inflated prices charged by the holiday companies during holiday periods and we do acknowledge that a child's participation in a family holiday can have a beneficial impact. However, as a school our main concern is the achievement and progress of our pupils, so that they can fulfil their academic potential.

The problems detailed above are not solely confined to Jotmans Hall primary School, as all the Headteachers within the local area have expressed the same concerns. Therefore all the Benfleet and Thundersely Headteachers have decided that from September 2017, the expectation with regard to attendance for all children attending their school will be 100% attendance.

Thus from September 2017, if a Leave of Absence Form is handed into Jotmans Hall School, with a request for 5 or more consecutive days or if a second holiday is requested within an academic year, that does not fall within the criteria for exceptional circumstances, then the school will be forwarding this information to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service, which may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances involves:

- Music festivals, examinations or performances.
- Approved sporting activities
- Recognised examinations (e.g. dance, music or LAMDA).
- Visits to a new school if a pupil is changing school mid-year due to moving house.
- Family circumstances. Applications may be authorised for the following:
 - Close family weddings (up to two days)





- Close family funerals (up to two days)
- The graduation ceremony of a parent or sibling
- Severe illness of a close family member.

The definition of close family is: mother, father, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother.

We ask that you work with Jotmans Hall Primary School to support your child's academic progress and attainment, and avoid booking family holidays within term time.

Thank you for your cooperation and support with this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs N kadwill
Headteacher