



Horwood & Newton Tracey Community Primary School  
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Headteacher - Lisa Eadie

26<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Re: Absences during term time**

As school governors, we are committed to helping raise pupil attainment levels and one way we do this is by undertaking regular scrutiny of school attendance data. As our school data shows an increasing level of unauthorised absences, the full governing body agreed for the need to contact all parents to explain the school's current position in terms of the law and what absence requests we are permitted to authorise. In this way, we hope to reduce the level of unauthorised absences and ensure our pupils receive an effective full time education, as we believe that every minute of every day is important. Importantly, research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on learning they have missed. Additionally, some children may find it harder to cope when they return to school from absence.

The law (current legalisation within the education act) allows schools to consider individual parental requests to authorise unavoidable absences (using the absence request form L5). However, the law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. Therefore, Mrs Eadie can only authorise such requests if they are exceptional circumstances that cannot be avoided. Some examples of unauthorised absences are genuine illness, examinations with external authorities or unavoidable medical appointments (although we do ask that you try and make these after school if at all possible). Taking holidays during term time will not be authorised.

If your request is refused and you still take your child out of school, we record this as an unauthorised absence. If your child has a number of unauthorised absences then this will be discussed with our designated Educational Welfare Officer and, together, we can make a request to the Local Education Authority (through the Education Welfare Service) to instigate parental responsibility measures. This could mean receiving any of the following:



A school absence penalty notice – should a school absence penalty notice be issued, one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved.

A magistrates summons (persistent unauthorised absence)

This could lead to a criminal record, a fine of up to £2500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months,

We hope this has helped to further clarify our current position as a school, in terms of the law, the Education Welfare Service and the impact of school absences on children's attainment levels.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact either Mrs Eadie, or our school Education Welfare Officer, Linda Page at [linda.page@babcockinternational.com](mailto:linda.page@babcockinternational.com).

Yours faithfully

Sarah Williams  
Chair of Governors

Paul Williams  
Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee

