

Great Easton C of E (Aided) Primary School  
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Headteacher: Claire Jackman

29<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to inform you of the forthcoming changes to the persistent absence threshold that have been introduced by the Government. From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015, the Government is reducing the threshold from 15% to 10%. This will now class a student with attendance below 90% as a 'persistent absentee', compared with the previous figure of 85%, regardless of whether the school has authorised or unauthorised the absence. This equates to 38 sessions or 19 days of absence across the academic year.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable students to fulfil their potential. We monitor the attendance pattern for all students and seek to work actively with parents to ensure that regular attendance is maintained.

The Department for Education highlights the fact that taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress. A pupil who takes 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year. 10 days absence also means the pupil will miss 50 hours of education.

As a school we are fully aware that, from time to time, children are ill and cannot attend school, however, minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold, are not considered acceptable reasons for children not attending school. Repeated absences from school may lead to us asking you to obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery, as recommended by the Government.

I would also like to remind you that the law does not give any entitlement to parents to remove their child from school during term-time for the purpose of a holiday. Leave of absence can only be granted where an application has been made in advance and it is considered that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Essex County Council advice states that exceptional circumstances may include;

- ◆ An immediate family member is critically/terminally ill
- ◆ Families who have been through a traumatic event
- ◆ Families where a parent/carer is able to demonstrate clearly (e.g. a letter from an employer which can be verified) that they are restricted to all annual leave within school term time.

- ◆ Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- ◆ Days of religious observance
- ◆ Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- ◆ Transport arranged by the LA has failed to arrive where the pupil lives beyond statutory walking distance

If an absence is not authorised and holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days ) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Yours sincerely

Miss Jackman  
Headteacher