



Royal Cross Primary School

Lancashire's school for deaf children

Dear Parents

Improving School Attendance

At Royal Cross, we expect children to attend school every day, if they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We feel that the most important way to promote good attendance is to ensure that both pupils and parents have a positive relationship and good communications with school. We like to reward good attendance through special certificates awarded to pupils in assemblies at the end of each half term.

Why Regular Attendance is Important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence also disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Research shows that pupils who attend school regularly are more likely to do well in the future. Regular attendance helps children to develop their confidence and to make and keep lasting friendships. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Leave in term time – school policy from July 2017

On matters relating to term-time pupil absences, the Education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) Regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013, removed all references to 'family holidays' and 'extended leave' as well as the 'notional threshold of ten school days'. The 2013 amendments made it clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless '**exceptional circumstances**' prevail.

It is important that parents understand that leave in term time will not be agreed by us at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'.

Royal Cross School applies the 'exceptional circumstances' criterion to all requests and those considered not to be exceptional will be referred to the Local Authority for the issuing of a **penalty notice**. This follows previous visits from the Local Authority concerning the high numbers of term-time holidays taken by our pupils. The result is that school must take a more careful look at how term-time leave is authorized. I hope I can count on the support of parents in this.

When asking for term-time leave parents are asked to consider

- Leave in term time is not a 'right'. Absence from school can have a serious impact on your child's education. All requests for leave in term time must be made in advance of confirming any arrangements and may be granted at the head teacher's discretion dependant on the circumstances.
- Requests must be made in writing and must evidence any 'exceptional circumstances' which fit the

criterion of **'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'**.

- Changes to the Regulations mean that schools can only authorise leave in term time if the circumstances surrounding the requests are exceptional.
- The use of **Penalty Notices** may be considered under certain circumstances, including where leave is taken without agreement.

Guidelines for term-time leave

- Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All the pupils at Royal Cross fall into this category and decisions made about term-time absence take the needs of our pupils into account on an individual basis.
- Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or a crisis. Royal Cross will consider any requests that fit into this category on an individual basis.

In considering the request we will also look at

- Each pupil's individual record of attendance.
- Other periods and patterns of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

I hope that this has been useful in explaining our schools updated approach to improving school attendance. A complete version of the School Attendance Policy is available from the school office and on the school website. If you have any queries about the contents of this letter, or if you are concerned about your child's attendance please contact school. We want to see all the pupils of our school achieve their full potential, and regular attendance is vital in achieving this.

Thank you for your support in this area.

Bev Hennepfer

Headteacher

Friday 29th July 2018