

September 2017

Dear Parent,

**Re: Statutory Guidelines regarding leave of absence**

Each academic year we are advised to remind parents regarding the regulations on requested leave of absence from school.

Despite recent media interest in this issue, please be aware that there have been no changes to Headteachers guidance in this matter. Statutory guidelines state: "Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances".

Requests for leave, in exceptional circumstances, should be made in advance of the event and in writing. Specific details should be included such as dates, and should be addressed to Mr Twynham, Head of School. Should the request be for other planned absences, such as participation in sporting or other educational representative activities, the same procedure should be followed. We will require documentation regarding this, such as a copy of the selection letter or confirmation of an exam date. If a leave of absence is granted, then it will be for a fixed period of time. Regulations are clear that any lateness in the return to school may be deemed as **unauthorised leave of absence**.

If a parent does not apply for leave, but we believe that the pupil has been taken on holiday, then we will write to the parent to express our concern. The parent will be expected to provide contrary evidence to support the absence by a specified date. Should this not be provided then the absence will be coded as **unauthorised leave of absence** and the relevant procedures will be applied. Retrospective approval for absence cannot be granted.

As a result of the national attention on the fining of parents for taking their child on holiday in school term time, the County Council have reviewed the rules around unauthorised leave of absence and issuing penalty notices to parents. This review is ongoing. As a temporary measure, when a student has 10 days or more of unauthorised absence within the previous two consecutive half terms, a penalty notice may be issued to parents.

Should a fixed penalty notice be issued, the fine applies to '**per parent/carer and per child**'. This is regardless of who applied for the leave. Currently the parent has 3 choices:

- A fine of £60 if paid within 21 days
- A fine of £120 is paid after 21 days but within 28 days
- In the case of a non payment of the fine then Notice will be withdrawn and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. If found 'guilty' then this would result in a criminal record for that parent.

I very much hope that the above will be for information only. I recognise that parents work hard to ensure that their child/ children attend John Taylor on a regular basis, and we appreciation your support.

Yours Sincerely

Mr J Twynham

Head of School