Anthony Gell School
Cluster of schools

June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to give you more details of the new absence regulations which affect all requests for leave of absence from schools from 1st September 2013. As you may well know, Headteachers have been told that they must not authorise any leave of absence, including holidays, except in exceptional circumstances. The previous rule that parents/carers could ask for up to 10 days leave of absence for holidays per school year has been removed.

All the Headteachers in our cluster have met to discuss these new regulations and to agree a common definition of 'exceptional circumstances' so that there will be consistency across the schools in the area. We have agreed two tests which we will apply to each application. These are:

- Could this leave reasonably be taken at another time?
- Will the leave unduly affect the child's education and progress?

If the answer to either of these questions is yes, then the application will be refused. Should a parent/carer decide to take their child out of school when leave has been refused, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and this will be picked up by the Education Welfare Service. So that we do not make any inconsistent decisions across the schools, the application for leave will also ask if you have siblings at another school. If you do, the Headteachers will discuss the application and come to an agreed decision. It is vital that you do not book any event that requires leave from school before checking to see if it will be authorised. The fact that an event is already booked, cannot be part of the decision making process.

All the Headteachers accept that there are challenges in implementing this new policy, which we will keep under review at our regular meetings. We trust that parents will understand that we are doing our best to implement the policy as sensibly as possible and that we are happy to discuss the process with parents. We all believe that young people should be in school as much as possible in order to make the best possible progress.

The standard letter from the Department for Education is reprinted on the reverse of this letter so that you can read the full details of the policy.

Yours sincerely

E Foster

Headteacher

School Attendance Policy

The Department for Education expects schools and local authorities to promote good attendance and reduce absences, including persistent absence. This is because we know that missing out on lessons leaves children/young people vulnerable to falling behind. Children/young people with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary schools.

The Government has recently made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which come into force on **1st September 2013.** These state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

As a consequence of these changes I will no longer be able to approve requests for leave of absence for reasons that are not considered to be special or exceptional such as:

- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
- Days overlapping with beginning or end of term

Parents needing leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances** should complete a form at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in detail. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively.

I would like to remind parents that this is Government policy and parents who take their children on holiday without permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on the child's record and will be monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Service. Parents could be issued with a fixed penalty notice and/or court action.