



Warfield C of E Primary School Governing Body

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A Statement About Term-Time Leave

Dear Parents and Carers

There has been much media coverage in recent years about the case of a parent on the Isle of Wight and his challenge to the fine issued for his child's absence. While this has led to some uncertainty and speculation, it is important to note that the High Court ruling in April 2017 was clear and unequivocal that children should not be taken out of school in term time and that the fining of parents is legal and correct.

Regular attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem. There are 390 school sessions in a year – missing 10 sessions represents 2.6% of the school year.

As a school, Warfield are concerned about the increasing number of requests for term time leave of absence and our policy is quite clear that term time leave can only be authorised in very special circumstances. We will always try to act with compassion and be supportive of situations such as family bereavements. At the same time, our policy is clear that a holiday is not a special circumstance and leave of absence will not be authorised.

The Governors currently review the school's attendance policy termly – at the last such review there was full support for the position within the policy that the Headteachers should fine parents where unauthorised absence occurs. We believe that consistency is important and the stance is that all fines should be issued – it would be controversial and difficult to manage if some parents were fined and some were not. A copy of our policy is being sent to all parents with this letter.

The position of Governors at Warfield School is consistent with the approach taken by most other schools in Bracknell Forest Council, and the majority of other local authorities in England. With this letter, we have attached Bracknell Forest Council's leaflet on "*Leave of absence from school*" which underpins our policy, and a copy of the school's Term-Time Leave policy.

The Governors also wish to make it clear that this policy is driven purely by educational reasons and not financial reasons. The school does not actually receive the money from the fines as it is paid direct to Bracknell Forest Council.

We hope this clarification is clear and helpful.

Paul Stowe, Chair of Governors