

Friday 22nd September 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,

Holidays in term time will not be routinely authorised

This letter is about students missing learning due to holidays.

I would like to remind you that the law gives no entitlement to parents or carers to take their child on holiday during term time.

Should you wish to do so, you should submit a request in writing at least 6 weeks in advance. Such requests are not usually authorised, except in exceptional circumstances and never for more than 5 days.

In line with local and national Government guidance, the Academy does not class routine family holidays as exceptional.

The following circumstances are also not considered exceptional:

- family weddings
- parents or carers patterns of work, including holiday patterns
- reduced costs or decisions relating to finance of holidays during term time

'Exceptional circumstances' are considered rare, significant, unavoidable and short, and any resulting absence from school could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Following the Isle of Wight vs Platt court case in 2016, Penalty Notice fines for holidays during term time were suspended until the Supreme Court ruled on this matter. You may be aware that the Supreme Court subsequently overturned the decision of the High Court. This means that the Local Authority and Educational Welfare Service have reinstated Fixed Penalty fines.

Parents and carers will therefore receive a Penalty Notice fine from Rochdale Local Authority if they take their child out of school during term time without authorisation from the Academy for 10 sessions (5 school days) or more. The fine is £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Failure to pay the fine could lead to prosecution in Magistrate's Court.

No warning will be issued from the Local Authority because all parents have been informed via the Academy website and previous letters regarding this issue.

The Academy fully appreciates that there are a number of reasons why a family may seek a holiday during term time, including the financial difficulties that some parents face when booking holidays during school holidays. However, the Local Authority continues to monitor all school absences and will challenge all schools and parents that do not adhere to Government legislation. They do this to secure improved attendance and achievement for all students in the borough.

Further information on this matter is available at the Department for Education's website: www.dfe.gov.uk. In addition, the Educational Welfare Service's policy on Fixed Penalty Notices (including Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Leave during Term Time) is available to view on the Academy website.

You can contact the Education Welfare Service in Rochdale on **01706 925 115**.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the school to thank you for your full support in this matter by not taking your child out of school during term time.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Preece
Principal