



Please ask for: Jim Steven
Direct Dial: 01463 702804
E-mail: Jim.steven@highland.gov.uk
Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Date: 28th November 2014

Dear Parent

HOLIDAYS TAKEN OUTWITH THE NORMAL SCHOOL HOLIDAY PERIOD

I am writing to you to seek your support in what is an important matter for your school. We continue to work hard on raising standards of achievement in our schools. A key part of our strategy is to minimise absence levels. Parents play a vital role in ensuring their son or daughter attends school as much as possible.

While the vast majority of parents plan family holidays within the allocated 12 weeks during the year, there has been an increasing trend for some parents to remove pupils from schools for holidays.

My reason for writing to you is to ask you to very carefully consider the implications on your son or daughter's education if you decide to remove him or her from school for a family holiday. I do so in the full knowledge that, for some parents, it is not always possible to plan a holiday in the designated school holiday periods. For some parents, summer is a very busy time and a holiday cannot be taken then but I would encourage the use of our two-week October holiday period if you are in this category.

When considering whether or not to exercise your right to remove your children from school for a family holiday, please be aware that such a decision:

- will result in a significant loss in classroom experience;
- will result in a pressure to 'catch up' on missed work by pupils;
- could result in pupils missing assessments with consequential impact on pupils and teachers;
- could result in the loss of curricular activities;
- will affect school attendance records and efforts to raise standards of attendance;
- under the guidance issued at a national level, most family holidays will be coded as unauthorised absence, only in exceptional cases will the absence be recorded as authorised.

In conclusion, I would ask you to be aware of these considerations when making decisions on planning holidays during term time. I have enclosed a link to the holiday dates for session 15/16 to aid you in your planning of any holidays you may be considering. If you do decide to make holiday arrangements during term, you should confirm this in writing to your Headteacher.

Finally, you can check on the school holiday calendar and many other Council details on the Highland Council website. It can be accessed at www.highland.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Steven', with a horizontal line underneath.

Jim Steven
Head of Education
Care & Learning