



Persistent Absences are identified as an area for improvement in our latest Ofsted report (January 2019):

**Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:**

- **rates of persistent absence are reduced by making sure that parents recognise the impact on pupils' learning of taking extended leave during term time.**

### **PERSISTENT ABSENCE/EXTENDED HOLIDAYS; IMPACT ON LEARNING**

We are very concerned regarding the level, and length, of extended holiday requests we are now receiving. We are also concerned regarding persistent absences which mean a child's absence falls below 96%. Any absence from school is disruptive. However, an extended holiday or persistent absences have a larger impact on our children than initially imagined by parents. Several issues disrupt not only learning but social issues too:

- Children come to school to learn from their teacher. While work can be provided for our children, this can only be revision work as direct teacher input is necessary for children to learn and be supported. Often work is not completed while away which also has an impact and children return to school further behind than when they went away.
- Gaps in learning as a result of absences cannot always be rapidly fully closed. It takes considerable time for children to make up their learning. They also feel frustrated as their peers are further ahead and understand the missed concepts. This can cause the children to become disheartened and often influences their efforts as a result.
- Friendship groups shift while children are absent for any length of time. Children learn – quite rightly – to join others and share their time with a different set of children. Therefore, when a child returns it can be upsetting for them to adjust to this fact. Friendship problems can occur and again it takes time for this to settle down following an extended absence.
- School is routine. Children thrive within this routine and feel secure. Upon returning from extended holiday, children take some time to adjust as their routine has been missing while away. Again, this takes time and therefore impacts on their ability to be fully ready to learn.
- Children often return to school tired following an extended holiday and sometimes become poorly as a result. Further absences then occur and again this impacts on learning.
- Persistent absences can lead to children feeling isolated within class and behaviour issues can result.

### **THE LONGER THE ABSENCE THE BIGGER THE IMPACT.**

In order for our children to achieve their best, while we understand the financial reasons for doing so, we ask that our parents fully consider the impact extended holidays in term time have on their children. Parents have chosen to take their children away for a few days which lessens the impact dramatically. When extended holidays are for weeks at a time – or even months – this has a dramatic and long lasting impact on children's ability to catch up on missed learning – sometimes it can take more than a year for the gaps to be closed. We ask the same when parents make the decision to keep their children at home rather than bring them to school on a regular basis.

Governors have therefore asked me to reinforce the considerable disruption to education that extended holidays and persistent absences have on children. Ofsted, too, have now highlighted this issue and seek the support of parents to reduce the rates of persistent absences caused by extended holidays.

**Please do think before keeping your child at home or booking an extended holiday, consider the timing of the holiday, its length and the year group your child is in.**

**Also do please fully take into account the impact described above. We seek to work with parents and school always has the best interests of your child at heart.**

