

Heckmondwike Grammar School: Statement on the taking of holidays in term time.

The school policy is **not** to authorise requests for leave of absence for holidays during term time. This is made clear in the attendance policy.

The school's attendance rate is typically around 97% overall, and we are very keen to maintain and even improve upon this excellent figure.

Absence can have a significant impact on achievement and it is very difficult and potentially stressful for a student to catch up when schemes of work proceed apace, as is the case at Heckmondwike Grammar School. It can be difficult, impractical or even impossible for teachers to cover the ground again for the absent student, as to do so would delay the progress of the others in the class, and would divert time and resources away from the planned activities.

Parents who request holiday absence often comment that their child will catch up any missed work on their return. However, this approach suggests that high quality learning depends only upon completing certain tasks. We believe that active participation in the actual lessons is vital in developing a deep, functional and flexible grasp of the subject matter. Whilst students are indeed expected to catch up quickly any written work they have missed, this by no means ensures a full understanding of the content or skills that were emphasised or developed in the lessons themselves. Furthermore, there is much more to lessons than just written work: for example, the benefit of any group work or practical activities cannot be recreated. In any event, the act of copying up may require a significant contribution from other students in terms of lending their books, explaining what to do, etc.

In examination years, further complications arise as students prepare for assessed components or are required to complete internally assessed controlled assessment tasks that contribute to examination grades. These are often to be completed within specific weeks of the year and cannot be accommodated outside these times.

I am sure you will understand that our perspective on attendance is borne out of concern for the students' achievement and well-being more than any other consideration.

Whilst we would hope and envisage parents would fully appreciate the school's stance on this matter and not take holidays in term time, please do understand the school holds the right to fine parents, through a fixed penalty notice, if parents do decide to take a term time holiday.

In all cases, absence from school for holidays will be recorded as **unauthorised**.

Mr P D Roberts
Headteacher
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