



Holy Family Catholic Primary School
Hall Lane, Cronton, Cheshire WA8 5DW
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Headteacher Mrs J Cook-Hannah

24th June 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

Holidays during term time

As you know, holidays during term time are a contentious issue with the Department for Education trying to implement changes to the law after the recent court case.

We are aware of how difficult it can be for some families to have time off work during the school planned holidays. One of the reasons our governors fought to have two weeks in May/June was to offer our parents another good alternative date for a family holiday: better weather and hopefully lower costs. We also chose not to issue fines to our parents, under great pressure to do so.

Unfortunately though, some families are extending this planned two week holiday to either the week before or the week of our return. Not only has this affected our overall attendance rate which fell to 84%, it has caused teachers huge difficulties with the standard tests and in school assessments. In Year 6, after the SATs, the children had to produce evidence for external writing moderation. These pieces of work had to be recent and fulfil the standards as detailed in the interim framework. We were also selected for the Science test which took place the Tuesday after our return. In Key Stage 1, there was a change this year to the administration of tests. Tests had to be given to children during the month of May. We wanted to give children the maximum time to prepare for these assessments and had planned to leave them until the last week but had to bring them forward when we became aware of more and more families taking their children out of school for holidays.

Unless we deem it to be an exceptional circumstance, we cannot authorise school holidays. We know how much our parents value their child's education: we have always had a good rate of attendance, always above national. Last year, however, the gap between our attendance and national was closing (96% : 96.2%) and we are making a plea for your support when making decisions about holidays during term time. There is a great deal of evidence to show that poor attendance impacts on children's achievements and it is due to this, schools monitor and promote good attendance. As the national percentage of attendance is currently 96%, if your child's attendance is below this, they are below national.

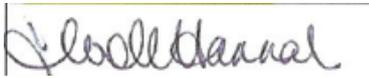


Ofsted make judgements about our school, using attendance as a key issue. Low attendance can have a massive impact on the overall judgement of the school.

We would really appreciate your support with this matter and, in order to promote good attendance, we will be monitoring the attendance of each class each week. Our Pupil Council will select an appropriate reward for the class with the highest percentage and the winning class will be published in the school newsletter.

Sincerest thanks in anticipation of your support with this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J Cook-Hannah', written in black ink on a white background. The signature is positioned below a thin horizontal line.

Mrs J Cook-Hannah
Headteacher