

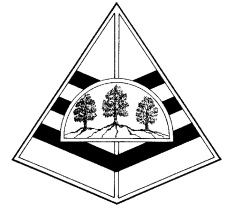
FERNDOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL

PETER GRANT WAY, FERNDOWN, BH22 9UP

Tel: 01202 876556 Fax: 01202 897065

e-mail: office@fernmid.dorset.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs G Allen BEd (Hons)



Avoid taking your children on holiday in term time

Dorset County Council is reminding parents and carers that taking children out of school during term time, without permission from the head teacher, could result in prosecution.

If requested by the school, the county council may issue a penalty notice of £60 for unauthorised absence, which if not paid within 21 days, will double to £120. If this remains unpaid, parents will be prosecuted in the magistrates' court.

The law regarding school attendance was clarified recently when the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the Isle of Wight Council in prosecuting a father for taking his daughter out of school without permission. It ruled that parents must ensure their children attend school regularly, and that 'regularly' means 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'.

The advice to parents and carers is:

- You must make applications for absences to the head teacher in advance, and these will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- Check what your school's rules are regarding the definition of 'regular' attendance.

Deborah Croney, Dorset County Council's Cabinet member for economy, education, learning and skills, said: "We are asking parents to consider the impact holidays during term time could have on their child's education."

"There is clear evidence that missing school can lead to lower academic achievement. Taking a child on holiday in term time can also interrupt the learning of the whole class, with teachers having to spend time helping children catch up when they return."

"One of our top priorities is enabling children to have the best possible start in life, and a major part of this is education."

Find out about school attendance on dorsetforyou.gov.uk

- The county council is now issuing penalty notices for holiday absences which have arisen since the ruling on 6 April. To date, 176 penalty notices have been issued. Penalty notices are £60 per parent per child.
- The county council supports schools by providing an Attendance Service to offer advice and guidance on all attendance concerns, whether this is holidays in term time or pupils with poor attendance. The service can offer direct work with parents and pupils to help address any issues which are affecting a child's school attendance.

July 2017

