



16<sup>th</sup> January 2013

Dear Parent,

**UPDATED ATTENDANCE POLICY AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS IN TERM TIME**

Following a close look at the absence rates of our students, and the drive to provide the very best education for everyone in school, the Governing Body has been looking at the issue of holidays taken in term time. Whilst our absence rates are broadly in line with what would be expected, our holiday absence is far greater than the national average.

We are sure you will agree that for our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is absolutely unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and we can all accept that regular absence will seriously affect learning and progress. However, any absence is disruptive and even one day may mean that a crucial aspect of learning is missed that might never be recaptured.

Government guidelines require us to assume that any holiday in term time is unauthorised. It is a legal requirement for children to attend school for 190 days of the year during term time. Previous policies may have given the impression that up to 10 days holiday was acceptable. This letter is to let you know that the policy has now been revised in line with Government and Local Authority guidelines, which are much more explicit. This means that up to 10 days holiday MAY be authorised by the Headteacher, but ONLY in EXTREME circumstances (usually on genuinely compassionate grounds). Any parents requesting a holiday in term time may be requested to attend a meeting with the Headteacher. Please note, this is not a material change to the policy; mainly it is a clarification of the way in which we will apply the rules which have existed for some time now.

A copy of the new policy is available on the website ([www.tarletonacademy.org](http://www.tarletonacademy.org)) along with the new Absence Request Form. The policy explains more fully the logic behind this tighter regulation. Our new Absence Request Form is based on the Lancashire County Council standard form.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and we look forward to a decrease in avoidable absence.

Yours faithfully,

*Helen Dicker*

Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Governing Body at Tarleton Academy

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