

Swanmore Pyramid of Schools  
May 2010

Dear Parents

Research shows there is a strong correlation between a child's attendance and their performance at school. For example, children who have 15 days or more absence from school each year are far less likely to achieve the national expectation of Level 4 at the end of Year 6. As a Pyramid of Schools we have recently spent a great deal of time reviewing our absence levels and, more specifically, the amount of time children are unnecessarily absent from school due to family holidays being taken during term time.

Although each school will continue to work closely with parents on an individual basis to minimise pupil absence caused by reasons such as illness and lateness, the Headteachers and Governing Bodies of our Pyramid of Schools have now agreed a policy, in line with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance. This aims to ensure that the approval of requests for leave of absence is consistent and clear across the pyramid. By working together in this way, we believe we can have a positive impact on pupil attendance and therefore on their attainment.

Any approval of requests for leave of absence for any reason is at the discretion of the individual Headteacher. Furthermore, the relevant regulations make it quite clear that parents do not have the right or an entitlement to take a child out of school for the purpose of a family holiday during school time. From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010, therefore, Headteachers in the Swanmore Pyramid of Schools have agreed that requests for leave of absence for family holidays during term time will not be approved unless there are exceptional circumstances. The fact that a holiday during term time is cheaper will not, for example, be considered as 'exceptional circumstances'.

As a pyramid, we remain keen to continue to support our pupils and their families. If there are exceptional family circumstances which may necessitate a pupil's absence from school, please contact your child's Headteacher who upon receipt of a standard leave of absence application form will give careful consideration to the matter before deciding whether or not to approve the request for leave of absence.

We acknowledge this is a significant change in policy but hope we can rely upon your cooperation in our commitment to promoting the best possible educational opportunities for your child.

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This policy has been approved by Hampshire County Council's Children's Services Department which supports schools in promoting regular attendance and discourages absence from school for any reason.

Yours sincerely

Headteachers of the Swanmore Pyramid of Schools

*Andy Yeoman*

*Swanmore CE Primary School*

*Darren Campbell*

*Bishop's Waltham Junior School*

*Sally Wood*

*Curdrige Primary School*

*Ross Irving*

*Droxford Junior School*

*Linda Coumbe*

*Meonstoke CE School*

*Sarah Eastwood*

*Newtown Soberton Infant School*

*Steve Morrison*

*St John the Baptist CE Primary School*

*Annette Hillier*

*Swanmore College of Technology*

*Ginene Evans*

*Bishop's Waltham Infant School*

*Maria Ackland*

*Wickham CE Primary School*