

July 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

Holidays during term time

I would like to take this early opportunity to raise the issue of holidays taken during term time, even though I appreciate that this year there isn't much scope for taking holidays at any time!

Students at Freman College start many of their GCSE courses straight away when they join us in Year 9. They take important assessments throughout the year which often help to determine their GCSE groupings. The new GCSE specifications are very content-heavy. Students cannot afford to miss out on the teaching of this content which is often hard to understand if they have not had it explained to them in a lesson.

This means that from the outset students absolutely cannot afford to take time off school unnecessarily. This year, with the school time lost unavoidably due to the pandemic, this is more true than ever.

There is overwhelming evidence that absence from school has an extremely damaging effect on students' chances of doing as well as they should. Recent national research showed the following.

- **75% of students with attendance of 93.5% or better achieved 5 or more 9 - 5 grades at GCSE.**
- **Only 25% of students with attendance of 89% or less achieved 5 or more 9 - 5 grades.**

The link between attendance and achievement is only too clear.

Therefore we expect students to have attendance of at least 95%.

The law says that, 'Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances'. Headteachers are also advised not to grant leave of absence of any kind where the student's attendance is below 95% for the preceding 12 months.

Please note that if a student has been absent from college for a term time holiday they may not subsequently be allowed to take part in recreational visits such as the annual college ski trip.

Any parent or carer who wishes to discuss the possibility of their son or daughter having time off college, must put their request in writing to me. I will then contact them to discuss their request in more detail. Please be aware that in almost all cases it will not be possible to authorise the absence. Unauthorised absence may result in a fine or legal action.

Yours sincerely



Helen Loughran
Headteacher