

South Wilts Grammar School for Girls

A Specialist Science, Maths and Computing College

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Headteacher Michele Chilcott BSc MA **Deputy Headteacher** Amanda Smith BSc PhD

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Dear Parents / Guardians

Attendance / Absence Requests

Over the past year we have continued to turn down a number of requests for absence from school and I would like to take this opportunity to ask all parents to consider the impact of absence from school very carefully. For a member of staff to teach an effective series of lessons it is really important that all students attend all lessons and one or more students missing in a session can have a tremendous impact on the learning of others.

Government guidelines state that absence of any kind can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Thus we have to look very carefully into the authorising of any holiday request, and would like to remind you that a school is judged on the amount of both authorised and unauthorised absence it records. I am therefore reminding you not to book family holidays in school term time unless it is an exceptional circumstance and, when this is the case, that you supply as much information as possible when you send in the request form in order for a proper decision to be reached regarding authorisation.

It is equally important to think very carefully about any other requests for single day absences. Any activities which can take place outside school time, either during the holidays or at weekends should do so. It is not possible to authorise absences for music festivals, visits to shows or courses which can be done at other times. As a parent it may seem that an activity is fully justified; however we have to consider the impact on the whole class and not just the perceived benefit to the individual student. There are obviously exceptions, music examinations, for example, where there is no flexibility on timings.

It is also particularly important for those wishing to arrange additional work experience to fit this into holiday periods, or in Year 13 to coordinate this into the student's weekly timetable. The impact of missing a week of teaching at either GCSE or at A level is very serious and to be avoided except in exceptional circumstances. Year 12 students are also to be reminded that there is a limit to the number of university visits that can be taken in term time; the summer term is particularly important as is the on-going teaching throughout Year 13.

I hope that this explains why we need to consider each request for absence very carefully and why I am hoping for your cooperation in keeping such requests to a minimum over the coming academic year.

Yours sincerely

Dr A Smith
Deputy Headteacher

