

### **Holidays and Avoidable Absences in Term Time**

At Newton Abbot College we believe that in order for a student to benefit fully from their education and achieve success good attendance at college is crucial.

As of September 2013 an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 came in to force and greater clarity was introduced to the issue of schools and colleges authorising absence requests. These changes reinforced the Government's view that every minute of every college day is vital and that students should **only** be granted authorised absences by the college in 'exceptional circumstances'. **A family holiday is not normally considered by the Government to be an 'exceptional circumstance' and therefore will not be authorised by this college.**

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that, should you choose to take your child out of college without the authorisation of the College, Parental Responsibility Measures could be instigated. This could mean one of the following:

- A Penalty Notice (assuming one has not been issued in the past 2 years)
- A summons to the Magistrate Court which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.

Schools and colleges are required to notify the Local Authority if a student has a number of recorded unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absences are recorded when:

1. Leave has been requested but the circumstances are such that the College is unable to authorise the leave and it is taken anyway.
2. Leave is not requested and/or the College has grounds to believe that the student has been taken out of college for an avoidable reason (example – a family holiday). Only the Principal can authorise an absence. Last year there were occasions when the College was notified that a student was sick but the College later discovered and reasonably believed that the reason given for the absence was not genuine.
3. A student continually arrives late after the registration period has closed.

The College notifies the Local Authority in all of the circumstances listed above.

Should a Penalty Notice be issued as a result of unauthorised absence then one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently each Penalty Notice is for £120 reduced to £60 if paid within the first 21 days. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days court proceedings will be initiated. If a previous Penalty Notice has been issued within the past 2 years the Local Authority will proceed straight to court.

We understand the disappointment that the refusal of a leave request may cause but, as you can appreciate, this policy represents the College's responsibility and commitment towards ensuring your child's education and their future life opportunities. We hope you will support your child's education by ensuring they receive the maximum benefit from their time at college by attending punctually for the 190 days each year that the law requires (unless prevented from doing so by an unavoidable circumstances).

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Ring Assistant Principal