

Dear Parents/Carers

The Government has recently released updated advice on unauthorised absences from school. The Department for Education defines unauthorised absence as 'absence without permission from the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences and arrivals after registration has closed'. Research indicates that a pupils progress is directly proportionate to time spent in school e.g. the more days your child is absent from school, the more likely they are to not make expected progress.

The updated advice suggests:

- Ahead of a review. school are to continue as before and in line with guide lines set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 amended in 2013
- Headteachers continue to have the power to authorise leave of absence, but only in exceptional circumstances. While family holidays are enriching experiences, the school year is designed to give families the opportunity for these breaks without having to disrupt their children's education. It is for schools to consider the specific details and relevant context behind each request. Schools know their pupils best and are well placed to make those judgements.
- We need to continue reducing absence, building on the success schools and local authorities have already achieved, to support attainment and ensure all pupils fulfil their potential.
- At Martin High School we do not consider a term time holiday to be 'exceptional' circumstance and applications for leave will be addressed on an individual basis.
- Since the start of the 2015/16 academic year schools, a pupil has been classified as a persistent absentee if they miss 10 per cent or more of their own possible sessions, rather than if they reach a standard threshold of absence sessions. At Martin High School we define regular attendance as attending 95 % or more of pupils' possible sessions.