

Headteacher's Letter

Tuesday March 17th 2015

Dear Parent

I have been asked to distribute the attached letter from Mr J Clarke (Deputy Director of Children's Services, Hampshire County Council) to all parents.

The letter explains changes to **Hampshire's Code of Conduct with regard to school attendance from September 2015**. In summary, due to changes in the school attendance law, the code sets out the action schools must take for any child with 10 or more sessions (each session is a half day, therefore 5 days in total) of unauthorised absence from September 2015. Schools will be required to work with the Hampshire County Council to take legal action if a pupil's absence or lateness is considered unauthorised for 10 or more sessions.

You will appreciate that the new code from September also limits further the discretion we have as a school with regard to authorising a child's absence. If your child is unwell or absent for medical or dental appointments (that cannot be scheduled outside school hours) the absence would still be authorised if we receive notification of this from yourselves. We would, however, contact you if his/her attendance levels were causing concern.

We have always endeavoured to work in partnership with parents to promote the importance of pupils attending school each day and working with you to address any concerns that may arise at an early stage. Our Attendance Policy also covers that parents should only apply for Leave of Absence for their children during term time if it clearly meets the criteria of 'exceptional circumstances'. We will amend our policy and Leave of Absence forms to meet the new code from September.

We hope that we can continue to work closely with you to ensure your child's attendance at school with legal action only ever needing to be considered as a last resort in line with the new code. We know that for many pupils such an issue will never arise and thank you for your support.

Should you have any further queries regarding the changes set out in the attached letter I am happy to forward these onto Hampshire on your behalf or you may wish to contact directly. Contact details are given at the top of the attached letter for your information.

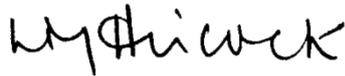
HEADTEACHER • MISS L HISCOCK B.ED (HONS)

Roman Road, Stockbridge, Hampshire SO20 6HA — Tel 01264 810555 — Fax 01264 810173

Email: office@testvalley.hants.sch.uk — Website: www.testvalley.hants.sch.uk

Finally, whilst writing I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the wonderful fundraising event being held at our school on Saturday March 28th for the Alex Lewis Trust. The Romsey Male Voice Choir are here in concert with pupils from our own school taking part. I understand some tickets are still available and do hope you can join us. Further information is given below.

Yours sincerely



L Hiscock (Miss)
Headteacher

Dear Parents and Friends of Test Valley School,

Please take a few moments to read this. You may be aware through local media of the situation of Alex Lewis, who with his partner Lucy, hosts the Greyhound Inn located in Stockbridge High Street. Some fifteen months ago Alex, then aged thirty three, suffered an appalling illness which has resulted in the loss of his legs, arms, and part of his face. Throughout his continuing ordeal he remains incredibly positive and in his own words 'considers himself lucky'.

You may also be aware of the Alex Lewis Trust, the purpose of which is to help fund Alex's rehabilitation costs including wheelchair, home adjustments, and prosthetics, all of which are crucial in helping Alex to resume as near as possible a normal life.

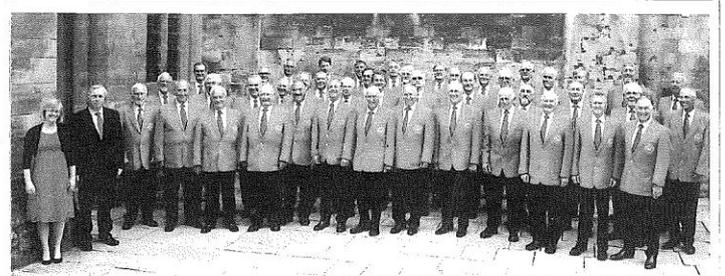
In aid of the Trust the **Romsey Male Voice Choir** supported by pupils from the **Music Section of Test Valley School** are producing a Concert of music and song in the School Hall on the evening of **Saturday 28th March**.

If you enjoy good music and good choral singing please come along and support a very worthwhile cause. The concert duration will be around two hours, including an interval for refreshments and a raffle with great prizes.

You may already have seen posters advertising the event at various locations in Stockbridge. **The Co-Op, Robinson's the Butchers, The Garden Inn and Wine Utopia**, all located in Stockbridge High Street, have kindly agreed to sell tickets. Tickets are priced at £10.00. for Adults and £7.00. for under 18s.

Thank you.

David Witt, Concert Secretary. RMVC.



Romsey Male Voice Choir

in concert with singers and musicians of
Test Valley School

invite you to an evening of music and song
in aid of **The Alex Lewis Trust**

At Test Valley School – Stockbridge
Hosted by **Dickie Davis** formerly of ITVs World of Sport
On Saturday 28th March at 7.30pm.
Tickets: Adult £10.00. Under 18s £7.00.

For Ticket Information visit: RMVC Website www.romseymvc.co.uk
Tickets on Sale from:
The Co-op, Robinson's Butchers, The Garden Inn & Utopia Wine
All located in Stockbridge High Street.

RMVC Patron: David Gower OBE
RMVC Registered Charity No 112438B



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Hampshire County Council

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Telephone 01962 841841
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Enquiries to	Lisa Marie Smith	My reference	Code of Conduct Letter to Parents and Carers 2015-02-20_(HF000008722593).doc
Direct Line	02380 816130	Your reference	
Date	26 February 2015	E-mail	LisaMarie.Smith@hants.gov.uk

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to all parents and carers on behalf of Hampshire County Council Schools and Education Centres, to inform you of changes to the way in which we will be responding to unauthorised absence from school from September 2015.

Firstly, we would like to thank all parents and carers who work hard in partnership with schools to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually. We would like to thank our parents/carers in particular for responding so effectively to the changes in law related to leave of absence from school being for exceptional circumstances only. Since September 2013 we have had a 47% reduction in leave of absence requests across Hampshire increasing attendance in our schools by 28 thousand days.

Similarly to the world of work, pupils should only be absent or late to school when they are ill or for medical or dental appointments (where these cannot be scheduled outside school hours). Any other absence needs to be requested and in all cases the decision is the headteacher's. In law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school. If your child is absent and the school have not authorised this then this is subject to legal action through a fine or prosecution.

In response to the changes in school attendance law Hampshire County Council has reviewed its 'Code of Conduct'. This code sets out for all schools what actions must be taken for any child with 10 or more sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence from September 2015. We are clear in our code of conduct that where a child or family requires support to achieve attendance rates above 90% that this is the first priority for schools. We are also clear that where parent/carers choose to ignore the law and are complicit in their child's absence then all schools with the



Hampshire
Services

HIAS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Deputy Chief Executive & Director of
Children's Services
John Coughlan, CBE

Local Authority must take legal action through a penalty notice fine or prosecution in court.

From September 2015 all schools will be required to work with Hampshire County Council to take legal action if:

- 1. A child has unauthorised absence for 10 or more sessions.**
- 2. A child is continually late to school and this lateness is unauthorised for 10 or more sessions.**
- 3. A child has any unauthorised absence during any formal examinations, assessment or testing.**

Please note each parent/carer can be issued a separate penalty notice for each child.

Further advice and guidance for parent/carers with respect to this will be available from September via our county website:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents.htm>

Hampshire County Council is working hard to support our Headteachers in upholding the law with respect to attendance at school. It is our duty with schools to prioritise good attendance, thus enabling us to closely work in partnership with our families and schools to ensure all our children achieve the best education they can and enjoy their school life fully.

Yours sincerely



John Clarke
Deputy Director of Children's Services – Education and Inclusion
Hampshire County Council