

May It Please The Crown, Let Our Children Go

One of the most viral posts this year involved a parent humbly begging the Crown for permission to take their child on an educational trip without risking the threat of force.

The post reproduced a letter to a parent. The principal who signed that letter thought this highly unfair, since her goals were allegedly aligned with the parents.

I quote from the letter itself:

“An accumulation of unexcused absences can result in a referral to our attendance officer and a subsequent notice of a violation of the compulsory attendance law.”

Such a serious threat would arouse fear in any parent’s heart. After shaking an iron-clad fist in this manner, “please call me if you have any questions,” is not a good-faith suggestion that we just talk about our shared goals. No, the status has already been clearly defined: the parent must placate and soothe, as a serf must appease a lord.

I do not reproduce that letter itself, since that particular principal is but one of a vast horde. Had she been a solitary exception, this meme would not have sparked so much outrage. I write to raise the consciousness of *all* teachers and administrators. I commend to their reading the resignation letter of John Taylor Gatto – but shall not threaten to call enforcement officers upon them, should they choose to spend their time otherwise.

If teachers and administrators truly wish to work amiably and in good faith with parents and students, they should renounce such use of force. Compulsory attendance laws should not be used as weapons against parents; all such laws should be repealed.

Good ideas can and should be propagated without the threat of force. If your ideas have value, sell them; do not force them.