



## **Leave of Absence Policy**

Parents are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure their child attends school regularly. There is no automatic right to take a child out of school during term time but the law allows Head Teachers to consider individual requests to authorise a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

The Head Teacher must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances justify an authorised absence and it is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information and evidence in order to establish this fact. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Requests for Leave of Absence for religious observance should be clearly stated on the Request for Leave of Absence form and authorisation will be at the Head Teachers discretion. It may be necessary to seek confirmation of days requested from the appropriate religious body. Any absence taken will affect attendance.

All children of statutory school-age who are registered at a school must by law, attend that school regularly. Any Absence from school can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and have a detrimental effect on their future progress. Regularly taking time off school for family holidays or events can have a significant impact on a child's achievement.

The request for an authorised leave of absence must be made at least 2 school weeks in advance and the Head Teacher may invite the parent into school to discuss the request before a decision is made.

If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the Head Teacher, the expectation is that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior to and after the date covered by the request.

While leave of absence may be granted during term time, it is entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion and it is not a parental right.

If the request for leave of absence is refused and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the Head Teacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued against each parent.

A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if the notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 days period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies.

Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a penalty Notice in respect of each child.

As a parent/carer you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results.

Parents should be aware of the possible consequences should their child take leave of absence. Any absence taken will affect their attendance and may affect their invitation to the 95% attendance end of term events.

### **Process for applying for Leave of Absence during term time:**

- A Leave of Absence form should be collected from the school office and completed at least 2 weeks in advance of any absence.

All of the exceptional circumstances justifying the request for absence must be stated. A Leave of Absence form will only be considered when completed by a parent/guardian with

legal responsibility for the child in question.

- The Leave of Absence form should be returned to the school office for the Head Teacher's consideration. The Head Teacher may invite the parent/guardian into school to discuss the request before a decision is made especially when the reasons are unclear. The impact the absence may have on the child's education will also be discussed.
  
- If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the Head Teacher, a letter will be sent to the parents informing them of this decision. The length of authorised absence will be clearly stated including the date the child is expected back in school and the possible consequences if the child fails to return on that date.  
The expectation is that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior to and after the date covered by the request and no additional days will be taken either before or after the dates requested.
  
- If the circumstances relating to this request are considered **not exceptional** and the absence is **not** authorised by the Head Teacher a letter will be sent to the parents informing them of this decision as well as the possible consequences of disregarding the refusal. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the Head Teacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued against you.
  
- Parents should be fully aware of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and that failure to pay could lead to prosecution in Magistrates Court.