



Leave of Absence Policy

Regular school attendance is essential to enable children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Interruptions in school attendance means that children may need to catch up on missed work and it can also affect their social life within school. It is the school's responsibility to provide the best education possible. We can only do this if children attend regularly.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to minimise the amount of time lost to term-time absence in order to maximise the educational potential of every child. This can be achieved with the support of parent/carers by ensuring any absences during term time are not taken unless there are exceptional circumstances. Absence for any reason during term time interrupts a child's education and disrupts educational progress.

Regulations and Guidance

The Department of Education requires schools to implement new regulations regarding the taking of Leave of Absence in term-time from 1st September 2013. The new law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. **The Headteacher would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Therefore the Headteacher will only be able to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and this will be at the discretion of the headteacher. No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right.** The Education Regulations state that applications must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each leave application is considered individually by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family. Applications forms are available from the office or to download from the school's website. The headteacher will welcome early discussion with you around potential applications. The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional';

- Service personnel returning from active deployment

- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

This is not an exhaustive list and the Headteacher will consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision. Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. Where the headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, the headteacher may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final.

The application form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to school as far in advance as possible at least **6 weeks** before the first date of the period of leave being requested. Parents/carers must obtain the schools permission **before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.**

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Amendments to 2007 Penalty Notice regulations reduce the timescales for paying a Penalty Notice. Parents must, from 1st September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

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