



***Absence
and
Unauthorised
Holiday Policy***

Introduction

Law and Regulations Regulation 12 of the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations 1981, states that schools have the discretionary power to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances during term time. This permission is only granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school and only in the most exceptional circumstances should this be granted for more than 10 school days in any one year.

Parents and guardians do not have the automatic right to take authorised holiday.

Permission must be given in advance of the exceptional leave after agreed procedures have been followed.

The law states that leave of absence granted for the purpose of a holiday should only be requested by the parent with whom the child normally resides. Only in exceptional circumstances may the amount granted exceed more than two weeks in any school year.

Good consistent school attendance is regarded as essential in securing the desired outcomes for children as itemised in 'Every Child Matters' and is crucial in ensuring that pupils have the best chance of success.

The Government's own guidance on the issue of term-time holidays states: **'Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday during term-time'**.

If a parent takes a pupil on holiday in term-time without the Head Teacher's permission, or if a child fails to return from holiday by the agreed date, this should be recorded as unauthorised on the pupil's school attendance record. If a pupil has not returned to school within 10 school days of the expected agreed date of return, the Head Teacher may take the pupil off roll, providing the correct procedure has been followed.

September 2013

This guidance reflects the changes to the Pupil Registration Regulations which came into force from September 2013 Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

The amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

It is for Head Teachers to determine if the requests for leave of absence are reasonable. Each request should be judged on a case by case basis, and we expect that Head Teachers will use their discretion sparingly.

Under the Code, Penalty Notices may be issued:

- If parents have not sought permission from the Head Teacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term-time.
- If the Head Teacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway.
- If a pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation and the pupil remains on the roll of the school. (Penalty Notices cannot be issued when a child has been removed from roll)

AND

- Where the absence has been recorded by the school as unauthorised in the attendance register on at least 10 sessions (5 school days).
- Penalty Notices will not be issued for term-time holiday with less than 5 days (10 sessions) unauthorised absence
- Penalty Notices cannot be issued if the parents are known to be out of the country
- Penalty Notices cannot be issued against the parents of children who are not of statutory school age
- The Penalty Notice is for £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days.

Schools

In setting school procedures and a school policy on leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, we consider the following:

- The pupil's overall attendance pattern
- Holidays already taken in the same school year.
- The child's stage of education.
- The ability of the child to catch up on the work they have missed.
- Time and duration of the leave.
- Proximity to SATs and GCSE exams and course work deadlines.
- The reasons for taking leave in term-time.
- Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave by their employer.
- Whether the leave is in the child's best interest.

We use a 'request for exceptional leave in term time' form that reflects the considerations above and that parents/carers understand the consequences of taking holidays in term-time without permission. (This could include the issue of Penalty Notices or removal from roll in the case of unauthorised extended holidays)

Procedures to be followed when requests for exceptional leave in term-time are made are outlined below.

1 A formal request form to be provided to parents for completion a minimum of two weeks prior to their leave.

2 The form to be returned to a named person-Head Teacher. The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 states 'Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school'.

3 Authorisation to be refused or approved by the named person mentioned above.

4 Parents may be invited into school to discuss the request within 5 working days of the request being made. Parents should be made aware of the possible consequences of unauthorised leave.

5 Following a decision about authorisation, those responsible for the pupil's registration to be informed.

6 If the absence is to be unauthorised, consideration should be given to a Penalty Notice application and/or a referral to Education Welfare Service or removal from roll if the conditions for this are met.

7 Exceptional Leave In Term Time Request form to be retained on the child's school file.

Information for parents

The City Council recommends that the following information should be communicated to parents at least annually:

- Leave in term time can seriously disrupt a child's continuity of learning.
- Leave in term time can result in gaps in a pupil's learning.
- Leave in term time can cause disruption to friendship groups.
- Leave in term time should always be avoided at the beginning of a new school term.

- Leave in term time should always be avoided close to examinations or tests.
- Leave in term time should always be avoided during the first year at a new school.
- Leave in term time should always be avoided during the Reception Year.
- It is recommended that parents request leave prior to confirming any booking.
- Pupils who attend school regularly perform better in their SATs and achieve higher grades at GCSE.
- Pupils who take 10 days' leave during term-time can achieve only a maximum attendance of 94.7%, even if there are no other absences through the year. The government recommendation for all school pupils to achieve their potential is 95%+.
- Research suggests that children who are taken out of school during term-time may never catch up on work missed.
- Taking a school child out of school in term-time may give them the unspoken message that it is acceptable to be absent from school during term-time.



BROAD HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Annual Holiday in Term Time

Dear Parent/Carer

Current legislation means that Head Teachers have no powers to authorise absences from school for children under any circumstances, so all absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences can have a profound effect on your child/ren's learning, even if for relatively short periods. There are no 'less important' days in a child's school career.

I am not in a position to stop you taking your child/ren on holiday during school time. However, I urge you to think very carefully before removing your child/ren from school on unauthorised absences. This will leave you liable to Penalty Notice Fines or prosecution for non-attendance whether or not the school has been informed.

All children who have unauthorised absences from school may be removed from roll and there is no guarantee that your preferred school place will be available on their return. However, if you feel you must remove your child/ren on an unauthorised absence, and are prepared to accept the potential consequences, it is important that you complete the form below to inform the school of your intentions. If the absence is for a relatively short period, this will increase the chance of the school place remaining available on your child/ren's return.

Name of child(ren)_____	Class_____	
_____	Class_____	
Address_____		
Reason for absence_____		
Dates of absence from_____ until_____		
Declaration		
I/we wish to remove the above child/ren from school on the above dates. I/we accept that this will be treated as unauthorised absence and accept the potential consequences of this course of action as described above.		
Signature of parent(s)/carer(s)_____	Date_____	
Print full name of parent(s)/carer(s)_____		
<u>Office use only</u>		
Name of child_____	Class_____	Current attendance_____
Head Teacher comments:_____		

Signature_____	Date_____	