



LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless they have an unavoidable reason to be absent. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and will affect their learning. Taking leave in term time will affect children's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by **not** taking children away in school time.

- All applications for leave must be made in advance, **prior to booking any flights or holiday arrangements**, using the "Request for Leave of Absence from School" form. Parents will be asked to state why leave must be taken during term time instead of during the school holiday period and whether the reason for the leave is due to an emergency/urgent matter.
- There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off school during term time and authorisation is entirely at the school's discretion, in accordance with regulation 7 of the Pupil Registration Regulations 2006, as amended. In making a decision the school will consider each application individually, including any previous leave in term time and relevant evidence to support the application may be requested.
- Parents / Carers must meet with a member of the office staff and the Headteacher to discuss the application and consideration of remote learning. School will also request evidence of the return flight details.

Parents/Carers are reminded of the circumstances when leave will not be authorised:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as the child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- In Year 2 & 6.
- If one period of leave has already been taken at any time whilst the child has attended this School.
- Where a pupil already has a poor record of attendance (below 96%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking the leave.

In all cases:

- Leave is only granted in exceptional circumstances where an emergency/urgent situation has arisen.
- Additional factors will also be considered such as length of the absence – Under no circumstances will school authorise more than 5 days.
- Exceptional circumstances for leave may not be considered valid if a child's attendance is already below 96% that year or in previous years.
- An example of an 'exceptional' circumstance is where the leave must be taken immediately due to an urgent/emergency situation arising.

Under current legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if their child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are unauthorised.

- The school will authorise one day's 'leave' (i.e. the days set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent is a member) per religious festival, e.g. Eid, Diwali, providing the festival falls within a weekday. If it falls at the weekend no leave will be allowed.

Pupils returning later than the date agreed, without prior school permission and without a valid reason:

- School will contact the 'emergency contact' number if a pupil does not return to school on the specified return date.
- A fixed penalty notice will be issued for an excessive delayed return from the leave of absence and where a minimum of 5 school days is lost to unauthorised absence during the current term in which the leave commenced.
- The child may be removed from the school roll if he/she does not return to school within 10 days of the agreed return date in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 paragraph 8(1)f and a place may not be available when you return.

When the pupil goes on leave of absence:

- If the leave has been agreed by the school, the absence is recorded as an authorised absence in the class register
- If leave of absence is taken without the school's authorisation, the absence would be recorded as unauthorised absence and the issuing of a penalty notice will be considered
- There will be no retrospective authorisation of leave.
- The Pastoral Team/Office Manager monitors applications for leave of absence.

Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced additional powers under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 authorising the Council to issue penalty notices where parents and/or carers are considered capable of, but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance.

Please remember that any leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and will attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.