



Care, Collaboration, Challenge

## Guidelines for Leave of Absence Requests

### Background to term-time pupil absences

On matters relating to term-time pupil absences, the Education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) Regulations 2013, which came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, removed all references to 'family holidays' and 'extended leave' as well as the 'notional threshold of 10 school days'.

The 2013 amendments made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' prevail. The regulations also state that head teachers should determine the number of school days a pupil can be away from school in the event that leave is granted for 'exceptional circumstances'.

### Guiding Principles

Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend together, including weekends and school holidays. As a school, we prioritise attendance. Therefore, absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is wholly at the head teacher's discretion based on the assessment and merits of each request.

As an academy, we will take a pupil's record of attendance into account when making absence related decisions.

The head teacher has the right to determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether a particular absence is authorised.

Below are some examples of Leave of Absence requests which will not be authorised:

- Holidays taken during term time, due to shift patterns, or work commitments
- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Holiday booked for the wrong dates by mistake
- Holidays booked by another family member
- Celebrating a family birthday/anniversary
- Adult appointments affecting bringing a child to school or collecting on time
- Attending a wedding, resulting in an absence of five or more days
- Holidays taken whilst your child's year group is on a residential visit
- Leave of absence taken during the Year 2 statutory assessment period (usually the month of May)
- Holidays taken during the Year 6 statutory assessment period (usually one week in May, the date of which is published in advance)

This is not a definitive list. All Leave of Absence requests will be considered. The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is, however, wholly at the Principal's discretion based on the merits of each request.

If a Leave of Absence request of five or more consecutive days is denied, then the school may ask the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notice. This is currently £60 per parent, per child, for those children that are of statutory school age (the term after their fifth birthday).

Below are some examples of Leave of Absence requests which would meet the criteria of 'exceptional circumstances':

- Absences to visit seriously ill relatives or for a bereavement of a close family member, but for the funeral service and travelling time only, not for extended leave
- Absences for important religious observances, but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not for extended leave
- Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or crisis
- Attending a family wedding, but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not for extended leave

Again, this is not a definitive list. All Leave of Absence requests will be considered. The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is, however, wholly at the Principal's discretion based on the merits of each request.