



St. Michael's Church of England Primary School

Carlisle Road, Dalston, Carlisle, Cumbria CA5 7LN · Tel: 01228 711544 · Headteacher: Mrs L Smith

Our school values: *Respect · Kindness · Challenge · Forgiveness · Perseverance*

21 November 2022

Absence Requests During Term Time

Dear Parents/Carers,

School attendance is very important at St. Michael's, our school days are so full of learning and experiences, that we expect every child to be present for as many of these as possible to get the most from their time at school.

It is shown that those with higher attendance achieve better at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6) and Key Stage 4 (Year 11). *Working together to improve attendance - DfE May 2022*

As parents, you have a legal duty to ensure that your child attends regularly, i.e. every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance. *Working together to improve school attendance - DfE May 2022*

Headteachers may only grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Before deciding whether to authorise a leave of absence, Headteachers will consider:

- the impact for the student's academic progress of any absence
- the pupil's attendance over the academic year
- whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams;

Examples of Exceptional Circumstances

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – Headteachers should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence- up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Serious illness of a close relative – only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement.
- Time- off relating to Child Entertainment Performances e.g. panto rehearsals and performances.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs".
- Weddings of parents and siblings – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however, we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married.

Holidays within term time very rarely class as exceptional circumstances. Though we understand the many reasons that families choose to book these, we cannot make it acceptable practice or encourage these absences. We do request and appreciate your honesty when giving reasons for absences.

We are introducing a new system to request an absence during term time. For any pre-arranged absence, a form should be completed and given to the office 2 weeks prior to the first date of the request. The form will then be looked at by the Headteacher/Deputy and responded to accordingly. Where a request is not authorised, you may be at risk of receiving a fine. If the absence takes your child's attendance below 90% (persistent absentee) then school will need to take measures to improve attendance.

Forms can be downloaded from the school website or collected from the School Office.

Kind regards,

Lorna Smith, Headteacher