

# Pupil Leave of Absence Policy

**Audience:** Parents and carers of pupils attending **the Bridges Federation**, Howard Infant School, Howard Junior School, King's Lynn Academy, Middleton Primary School, Reffley Primary School, St Edmund's Primary School and West Winch Primary School. **Date:** Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014 **Purpose:** To inform families of the rules and procedures regarding pupil leave of absence.

## 1. The Law

The law regarding authorised pupil absence has changed and it is no longer possible to routinely authorise absence from school. Please read this short policy so that you understand the law before requesting permission to take your son or daughter out of school. **You are highly unlikely to be granted authorisation for a leave of absence.**

This policy applies to all schools above most are in the KLA cluster. This means that you will be treated in the same way throughout your child's time at school, both primary and secondary. Each school may choose to have a wider policy on attendance, explaining how it encourages good attendance and monitors it. This policy looks purely at parental requests for a pupil's absence from school.

The law about pupil attendance is found in The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5), together with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, 2010, 2011 and 2013.

## 2. Accepted Absence

Pupils must either be marked by the school as:

- 1) Present
- 2) Attending an approved educational activity (organised by the school, such as a trip)
- 3) Absent
- 4) Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Authorised absences include illness, religious observance, exclusions from school and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence. Medical or dental appointments may be authorised should there be no alternative times available, as may be the case with hospital appointments. However, routine check-ups or GP visits should always take place outside school hours. Illness must be notified to the school on the first morning. Medical notes may be requested if the absence is prolonged or recurring.

**The taking of holiday in term-time is no longer an acceptable absence following the revised regulations of 2013.**

**There are no longer accepted numbers of days for holiday absence, e.g. 5 or 10 days, as in the past.** This is a legal change and not the independent decision of governors or the Headteacher.

## 3. Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

All other absence can only be authorised if there are exceptional circumstances for doing so. This covers all other personal leave, for instance for family events or compassionate reasons and any request for holiday absence. There must be a very strong case for why it would be impossible or unfeasible for the pupil to miss an occasion or event, or in the case of holiday, why it is impossible for the parent(s) to take holiday in **any** of the available school vacations. Unfortunately, requesting absence for a holiday in term time because the costs are too high in the summer break is not an exceptional circumstance: other vacation periods are available.

There is no complete definition of 'exceptional circumstances'. Each case is different and must be treated as such. Headteachers will confer with one another to try to treat families as fairly as possible in the **rare** circumstances where leave of absence may be granted.

Should you request leave of absence for more than one child, at different schools, Headteachers are likely to discuss the application together and will attempt to reach one decision.

However, each application is individual to the pupil and it is for the Headteacher of each school to come to a decision. The law tells us that even though a family may have one set of exceptional circumstances to be considered, the circumstances of each child must also be considered:

*Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.*

DFE advice to schools, November 2013

# Request for a Leave of Absence due to Exceptional Circumstances

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Name of your child's school:                  |  |
| Your child's full name:                       |  |
| Year group/class:                             |  |
| Name of parent/carer making this application: |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Please detail the name, school and year group of any other children you have requested authorisation for: |  |
| Date of application to the other school(s):   |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Dates of leave requested:<br/> <i>Please include all part-days and full days, e.g. noon 12/3/14 – 14/3/14, returning to school on 15/3/14</i></p>  |  |
| <p>Please outline the exceptional circumstances for your child and/or yourself which have led to this application for absence.</p> <p>Please explain why it is impossible to avoid this absence for your child at this time, including the reasons why there are no alternative suitable times outside of school hours or within any of the school vacations.</p> <p><i>Continue on a separate page if required</i></p> |  |

Schools seek to respond to applications within five working days, though this is not always possible. Please remember that we must have sufficient advanced notice to consider applications. All absences taken without prior authorisation cannot be authorised after the event.

Should you not wish to accept the decision, you may appeal to the governors in writing care of The Clerk to the Governors at your child's school. You should do this within 10 days of receipt of the school's decision.

By signing this application, please confirm that you have read the policy overleaf and please understand that **it is highly unlikely that leave will be granted** and that schools may issue fixed penalty notices or pursue court action should pupils be absent from school without authorisation:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For Office Use

Current Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_ Prior leave: \_\_\_\_\_ Authorised / Not Authorised / Further Information Required

Headteacher: \_\_\_\_\_ *Please attach the response to the parent detailing the decision in full*