

Authorisation of Leave of Absence during Term Time

The Department for Education (DFE) has announced important amendments to legislation surrounding holidays in term time.

From 1st September 2013, DFE amended the regulations surrounding holidays in term time. The DFE has removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. These new amendments make clear that **Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time** unless there are exceptional circumstances and **gives no entitlement to parent to take their child on holiday during term time**. From 1st September 2013, application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the Head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave.

The Government and the Local Authority have made the importance of school very clear - **there is no automatic right to any holiday in term time**. Up until this point we have always considered applications for leave of absence sympathetically, and granted leave providing certain criteria was met.

From the 1st September 2013, leave of absence must be requested from and agreed by the Head teacher in advance of any absence. Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances; Low cost travel or arrangements made by a family member or friends are not deemed to be exceptional circumstance.

Head teachers will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the schools governing body. The Local Authority can fine parents for failing to ensure their child attends school.

We fully appreciate the financial difficulties that some parents face when booking holidays, particularly during school holidays. Sunderland Local Authority is expecting that all schools will introduce firm policies and procedures and stringent checks to ensure that there is a significant reduction in the number of absences being authorised by school during term time. The Local Authority will be monitoring all school absences during term time and challenging those schools and parents that do not adhere to the new legislation.

The new legislation will bring about increased attendance and continue to improve standards in our school. Further information can be obtained from www.dfe.gov.uk

School Comment: Leave of absence can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and the Government have taken away the right for Head teachers to authorise ANY leave for the purpose of holidays. Any leave of absence must be requested in advance as it is against the law for a child of school age to be out of school without the Head teachers authorisation. As this is now enforced, the Governors of Richard Avenue Primary School will have no alternative but to adhere to the law.

For further information please contact the School Office on: 0191 553 6053

Pupil 'Leave of Absence' Request Form

I wish to apply for leave of absence during school term time for my child / children listed below:

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____ Class: _____

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Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____ Class: _____

Home Address: _____

Dates of Absence: Last day in School _____ First day back to School _____

Reason for Absence (please explain fully, why you wish to take your child / children out of school on the above dates. If you do not provide sufficient information, your form will be returned)

I confirm that by signing this form, I understand that the 'Leave of Absence' **does not** guarantee an **authorised** absence. The granting of 'Leave of Absence' during term time is entirely at the discretion of the Governors, with holidays being discouraged.

Signed _____ Parent / Carer Date: _____

(School will complete the rest of this form and return it to you)

Your Child / Children's Attendance record: (National Average is 95%)

| Child's Name | Current Attendance | Last Year's | Head's Comments |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| _____ | _____ % | _____ % | _____ |
| _____ | _____ % | _____ % | _____ |
| _____ | _____ % | _____ % | _____ |
| _____ | _____ % | _____ % | _____ |

Comments from Head Teacher

The above Leave of Absence is **Authorised / Unauthorised** _____ Head Teacher

Office use only: Date of receipt _____ Time _____ Staff _____

Absence Code allocated by Head Teacher _____ Total days LOA requested to date _____

Copy for parent ()

Class teacher ()

Copy kept on file ()