



SUNDON PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL Term Time Leave Policy

The school has adopted the following Term Time Leave Policy in conjunction with Cheynes Infant School and Lealands High School

INTRODUCTION

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and came into force from 1st September 2013. The amendments remove references to “holiday” from school and extended leave of absence as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

HEAD TEACHERS MAY NOT GRANT ANY LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME UNLESS THERE ARE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

The law does not give any entitlement to parents/carers to take their child on holiday during term time. Head Teachers have the discretion to authorise leave of absence only in **EXCEPTIONAL** circumstances and it is only for the Head Teacher to determine what is truly exceptional. School days are precious; children only attend school 190 out of 365 days. There are 175 days a year which parents/carers can use for any activities other than school.

EXAMPLES OF NON-EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The following examples are not reasons to authorise term-time leave:

- Going on holiday
- Preference of holiday dates or availability of cheap holidays/accommodation
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Preference for undergoing medical treatment abroad
- Relatives getting married overseas
- Religious events (for religious observance please refer to the religious observance guidance)
- Poor weather conditions at certain times
- Alternative travel arrangements not being fully utilised, resulting in a delay in returning to school.

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE WILL NOT BE AUTHORISED IN THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES:

- Pupil's attendance is less than 97% in the current academic year and 95% in the previous 12 months
- In SATs years 2 and 6; GCSE or any other public examination years. This includes Years 2, 6, 10 and 11.
- In a transition year - Year 3, Year 7
- At the beginning of any academic year
- Retrospectively
- If there are any other attendance concerns such as poor punctuality, pupil's ability to catch up on the work missed, etc.

We will also take into account the following:

- The pupil's general absence/attendance record e.g. unauthorised absences
- Proximity of SATS and public examinations
- Amount of time requested
- Age of pupil
- Length of the proposed leave
- Pupil's ability to catch up on work
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- When the request was made.

APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Requests must be made in advance or the absence cannot legally be authorised. All requests must be made at least two weeks in advance to the Head Teacher by completing the school application form. A parent/carer with whom the child resides must make the application even though the pupil may not be taking the proposed leave with them. The form must be fully completed and you will receive a written response confirming whether the request will be authorised or not.

Requests will not be processed more than 12 weeks in advance.

If leave is granted and you are travelling abroad you will need to supply the school with confirmation of your return flight tickets, such as bringing a copy of the flight tickets into the school reception.

EXAMPLES OF EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The following are examples of exceptional circumstances where a school *may* consider authorising term-time leave but are not obliged to do so. The final decision rests with the school:

- Close family member bereavement (no more than 3 days).
- Immediate family member funeral (up to 5 days, if travel abroad is involved)
- Immediate family member wedding (up to 5 days, if travel abroad is involved).
NB Immediate family members includes, for example, mum, dad, brother, sister
- Unavoidable delay in travel arrangements due to adverse weather conditions eg volcanic ash.
- Unavoidable delay in travel due to being deemed unfit to travel by medical practitioner, with proof provided to the school for the period of absence. (This presupposes that some leave has already been granted).
- For service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside of term time, if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

If you take your child out of school without the school's prior authorisation the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (which is illegal) and noted in your child's records. Leave of absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher.

Where a parent/carer has taken their child on leave of absence during term time for 5 consecutive school days or more, without the Head Teacher's authorization, Luton Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice. In these circumstances a warning will not be given.

Penalty notices are per parent, per child as appropriate, so if there are 2 parents both will have to pay the fine.

From 1st September 2013 penalty notices will need to be paid within 21 days at £60 or £120 within 28 days. Unpaid Penalty Notices, will result in prosecution for the absence in the magistrate's court and if convicted will result in a Criminal Record.

The school makes the decision as to whether the request of leave should be granted or not and the Local Authority makes the decision to impose a penalty for this.

FAILURE TO RETURN TO SCHOOL ON THE DATE EXPECTED

If there is a reason which delays the pupil in returning to school the parent/carer must inform the school immediately. The school will require evidence of this issue and will then decide whether the absence will be authorised. For any travel arrangements outside of the UK we require proof of return flights, prior to the leave being taken. This may prevent you from receiving unauthorised absence for your child and being fined if they are unable to return on the date expected. Each case will be assessed individually and medical evidence from abroad will not be accepted routinely as evidence that a pupil was unable to attend school. Dates will need to be checked and a translator may be required to clarify details of the medical certificate.

ROLL REMOVAL

A pupil can be removed from roll in either of these circumstances:

- If you take your child on leave of absence which has been authorised by the school but your child fails to return on the agreed date, any extra time absence from school will be counted as unauthorised. If your child fails to return within ten days of the expected date of return then the school may remove your child from the school roll and notify the Local Authority accordingly.
- Or if your child has 20 days continuous unauthorised absence.

Review

The Governing Body reviews this policy as required with LBC recommendations.

Agreed by Governors on 13th April 2016

Signed by Chair of Governors:



Next review date: As required in line with LBC recommendations.