Ashleigh

Primary School

Considering applications for discretionary leave of absence during term-time in exceptional circumstances

Adopted by Governors: September 2021

Review date: September 2023

Schools: discretionary leave of absence during term time

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, head teachers may no longer grant pupils any leave of absence during term-time unless there are ‘exceptional circumstances’ relating to the request, and parents / carers have made an application in advance.

* Leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head teacher’s discretion and is not a parental right.
* Headteachers cannot grant any leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances surrounding the application and an application has been made by parents/carers in advance.
* Schools are not allowed to grant retrospective approval and if parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.
* In the event that the Head teacher is satisfied there are exceptional circumstances which warrant them approving leave, it is the Head teacher who will determine the number of days a child can be away from school, after considering the child’s attainment, attendance and ability to catch-up on missed lessons.
* If you are considering asking permission for your child to be granted leave of absence from school, please think very carefully. Missing out on lessons will always have a negative impact on your child’s educational progress.
* All schools within Blackburn with Darwen are committed to working with parents and carers to provide the best educational opportunities for all pupils. It is widely understood that children make the best progress through regular and punctual school attendance.
* When a child is absent from school, valuable teaching and learning time is lost and it is often very difficult to make up for gaps in individual pupils’ learning.

If the head teacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant the granting of leave of absence, the head teacher will then determine the number of school days that can be authorised.

Parents / carers are liable to be issued with a penalty notice (one penalty per parent, per child) in respect of their children’s unauthorised leave of absence from school.

Applying

If you decide to proceed with an application, first contact school to arrange a meeting. This will give you an early opportunity to discuss your plans and to get hold of an application form for requesting leave of absence. Please remember to do this well in advance and you are strongly advised not to book a holiday without first completing an application form and getting prior approval from school.

Always give a date when your child will be returning to school. If leave is granted, but your child does not return within 10 school days of the agreed date, the Head teacher has the power to remove your child’s name from the school roll and there is no guarantee that a place will still be available at the same school when you return. It is very important to keep in contact with your child’s school if there is any change to your expected return date.

The head teacher will confirm in writing to you whether or not your application has been successful and, in cases where leave is approved, the number of days off school being granted.  
In law, parents of registered pupils of compulsory school age have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school both punctually and regularly.

A child reaches compulsory school age after their fifth birthday through until the last Friday in June of the school year (normally Year 11) that they reach sixteen. Young people are not allowed to leave school on their 16th birthday or when they receive their national insurance number.

Parents/carers who take a child on unauthorised leave of absence in term-time without school permission are likely to be issued with an education penalty notice by the Council. Penalty notices may also be issued in cases where children are absent from school for longer than was approved by the Head Teacher and do not return on the prior agreed date.

The penalty charge is £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the Notice.

Where a penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Council will normally start legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

For more information please contact school.

Chair of Governors: Les Campbell Date: September 2021

Headteacher: Ian Matthews Date: September 2021