

Application Process

- A parent requesting leave of absence during term time should make the application in writing at least two weeks in advance.
- A leave of absence request form is available from the school office or can be downloaded from our website.
- The school may invite the parent into school to discuss the reasons for the application and the impact the absence may have on the child's education.
- The school will reply to all applications in writing stating the headteacher's decision.

Consequences of poor attendance

- Good attendance at school is linked to achievement, progress and attainment academically.
- If your son or daughter's attendance falls below 95% it is of great concern to us and we have to discuss the issue with our Educational Welfare Officer. We will only be able to authorise absence under 90% in very exceptional circumstances. If the absence is due to an illness/medical issue then we will request you obtain a medical note from a GP/hospital.
- Research suggests that children who are absent from school may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results. When children are absent from school, they miss not only the teaching provided on the days when they are away, but are also less prepared for the lessons that follow which build on prior knowledge and teaching. As a parent, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

Hexham Partnership of Schools



Hexham Partnership of Schools' Policy for

for

St Joseph's Middle School

LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM-TIME

Information for Parents

Joint statement from Hexham Partnership of Schools

Introduction

Children of school-age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Regular school attendance for a child is a legal requirement of all parents.

There may be occasions when a child has to miss school, for example, if he or she is unwell. There are clear guidelines provided by each school as to when and for how long a child should be absent from school for given illnesses.

Any other absences should be kept to an absolute minimum. In particular, parents do not have the right to take their children out of school during term-time in order to go on holiday.

Facts about school attendance

Pupils/students with poor attendance are more likely to become 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) when they leave school (Department for Education).

- There is a clear link between a child's poor attendance at school and resulting underachievement across the curriculum.
- Out of pupils/students who miss between 10% and 20% of their primary school education, only 35% achieve 5 A* to C at GCSE.
- A two week period of absence is over 5% of a child's school year.
- A child's absence from school is seen as significant if they are absent for more than 12 days of the school year which is 94% attendance and persistent if they are absent for more than 19 days of the school year which is 90% attendance.

What does the law say?

Regulations from September 2013 state that a headteacher '*may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances*'. These regulations make it clear that parents do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for family holidays.

How will schools deal with requests for leave of absence?

The Hexham Partnership of Schools discourage parents/carers from arranging any events during term time and will as a rule, state that leave of absence will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances which might justify it.

In exceptional circumstances where leave of absence is granted, the pupil/student's attainment and ability to catch up on missed schooling will be the primary consideration.

The secondary consideration will be the pupil's current attendance. The headteacher will examine the attendance record and should he or she have any concerns, for example should the child's average attendance be below 95%, it is highly unlikely that any authorised absence will be given. We would remind parents that in all cases where pupils cannot attend school it remains the responsibility of the school to authorise absence, not parents.

What are "exceptional circumstances"?

It is the decision of the headteacher as to what might constitute exceptional circumstances. Each request for any term-time leave will be considered on an individual basis. Examples of exceptional circumstance would be:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting.
- Evidence provided by an employer that states leave cannot be accommodated during school holidays without significant consequence.

Issues parents need to be aware of

Should a school not agree to grant leave and the parents/carers take their child out of school regardless, then this will be counted as unauthorised absence.

Schools are now legally required to record absences which accrue as a consequence of leave of absence which has been taken without authorisation.

Failure to ensure a child's attendance at school is an offence under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996.

If the headteacher authorises the leave of absence, it is expected that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior to and after the date covered by the request.

If the headteacher refuses the leave of absence, and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the headteacher may refer the matter to the local authority requesting that a penalty notice be issued.

A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the local authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies.

Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.