

## APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE



As parents, you have the legal responsibility to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. Applications for leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and the number of days given determined by the Headteacher.

If you wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child in term time, you will need to complete this form and return it to the school office no later than 14 days before the requested date.

**Any leave of absence during term time which is not applied for or agreed to by the school will be recorded as unauthorised and will be referred to the Local Authority. This may result in a Truancy Penalty Notice (TPN) being issued or Prosecution under Section 444 Education Act for failure to secure regular attendance at school (see note below):**

Name of Child:	Class:	
Dates I am applying for leave of absence for my child	From:	To:
Number of school days that will be missed:		
Full names of parents and/or carers:		
Home address of parents and/or carers:		
This leave cannot be taken during the school holidays because:		
I have requested leave of absence previously this academic year:	YES / NO	
I have requested leave of absence last academic year:	YES / NO	
I also have children at (please name school/s):		
Parent/Carer Signature:		
Date of Request:		
OFFICE USE		
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is:	Authorised / Unauthorised	
Signed:		
Date:		

### TRUANCY PENALTY NOTICES

Unauthorised absence and persistent lateness may result in the issue of a Truancy Penalty Notice to each parent/carers, for each child for the period of absence from school. This will be issued as an alternative disposal to prosecution for failing to secure regular attendance at school.

The penalty notice is £60 per pupil, per parent/carers if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per pupil, per parent/carers if paid within 28 days.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice within the specified time will result in its withdrawal and will result in a prosecution under Section 444 Education Act for the non-attendance where the maximum fine is £2,500 and up to 3 months imprisonment.

The Isle of Wight Council Code of Conduct states that the 'Education and Inclusion Service on assessment of the Truancy Penalty Notice referral from a school retain the right to not process the request but determine an alternative cause of action e.g. for Consecutive days absence is in excess of 20 sessions (10 days).' For unauthorised holidays in excess of 20 sessions prosecution under Section 444 Education Act 1996 may be considered.'

## **Holidays in term time**

We often receive requests for parents to take their child out of school during term time. Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Amendments to the 2006 regulations make clear that a Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement – documentary evidence of this event is required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3), states 'on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs'
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent and evidence would be required in each case.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but the absence falls within either, the first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils), during Year 6 transition days (for pupils in year six), or during year 6 SATS week (for pupils in year six) the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option. When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parents/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school, eg wrapping around the school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family, eg family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child
- Whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams.

### **Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional**

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill
- Medical evidence may be requested
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments