



APPLICATION FOR NON-ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY

Pupils attend school for only 190 days each academic year. Full attendance is expected for your child's academic progress. The Local Authority expects all parents/guardians to ensure that their child attends school whenever possible.

Research shows that absences taken in term time will hinder the academic attainment of your child. **Absence cannot be authorised for holidays, birthday treats, shopping trips or other similar activities.** Headteachers cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If exceptional circumstances arise whereby you would like to discuss your child/children being absent from school please complete, and return, this form to the school office for consideration. The governing body may be involved with any decisions.

Please be aware that any absence will affect your child's overall attendance percentage for the year. Any subsequent absence, for example with illness, will reduce your child's percentage attendance even further.

	CHILD 1	CHILD 2	CHILD 3
Name of Child/Children (first and surname)			
Class			
Date requested			
Parent Name:			
Parent Address:			
Exceptional circumstance for non-attendance			
Parent Signature			

FOR SCHOOL OFFICE USE ONLY

HEADTEACHER AUTHORISATION GIVEN	YES		NO		REGISTER CODE	
HEADTEACHER'S SIGNATURE						
COMMENTS						
PARENTS NOTIFIED OF DECISION	DATE OF NOTIFICATION		METHOD OF NOTIFICATION			

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

As you know, the Government has tightened up the rules on pupil absence in term time and introduced fines and other measures to try to prevent unauthorised absences. In 2016 the County Attendance Team wrote to primary schools asking headteachers to make referrals to them of all children who take time off school during term time.

The Attendance Team has a statutory duty to ensure the regular attendance of pupils in Oxfordshire. They are obliged to:

- prosecute parents for pupils' non-attendance under section 444 of the Education Act 1996;
- issue Education Supervision Orders (ESO);
- issue Penalty Notices on behalf of schools.

Schools are being encouraged to start a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process if a pupil's attendance falls below 90%. This will mean Social Services (now called Social Care) will be involved and meetings will be set up, which could include several external agencies. Parents will be expected to attend these meetings, which are designed to ensure a child attends school regularly.

Even when a child is sick, schools are being encouraged to take action. If a child is off sick for 10 days or more, schools are being told to seek written permission from the parents to contact a child's GP for confirmation that a pupil is too ill to attend.

Can I remind parents that if children are not at school and we have not been told why they are absent then it becomes a safeguarding / child protection matter, which means the school is duty-bound to contact social services to report absences. I cannot emphasise strongly enough how serious this is.

I understand the temptation to book holidays and flights, which are cheaper during term time and I sympathise with parents who struggle financially. However, as headteacher I must do everything I can to ensure children attend school. I would be failing in my job if I turned a blind eye to this. This also goes for parents who think it is acceptable for their children to miss a day at school because they have either been away at the weekend or are about to go away. We have had one or two children who have been absent from school on a Friday or Monday because they have been away from home. It is only ever acceptable for children to miss school if they are too ill to be at school, have a medical or dental appointment, or if the circumstances are exceptional.

Missing school is detrimental to a child's education. It really can make a difference to whether a child succeeds or fails – even at a primary level. Indeed, secondary schools look at each child's primary SATs results, which they use as a baseline assessment to plot the likelihood of whether a child is capable of achieving A*-C grades at GCSE.

Schools are under pressure to ensure attendance is above 96%. If it dips below that then Lewknor Primary will not be judged as outstanding or even good. I cannot let this happen to our wonderful school and I would be letting down the children and staff if I failed to take action. I ask all parents to support me in this matter.

Thank you.

Mrs Cole
Headteacher