



OXLEY PARK ACADEMY

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Dear Parents/Carers

Holiday Leave Entitlement

Following many statements regarding school attendance by the Secretary of State, Mr Gove, the Government is now introducing some significant changes to attendance regulations for pupils at school as from this September, some of which you need to be aware. The most important of these is in relation to term-time family holidays. Below is a quotation directly from the Department for Education Circular:

'Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.'

Please can you draw your attention particularly to the second sentence of this paragraph. Clearly, there are many situations which may constitute exceptional circumstances, but as a generality 'exceptional' will be interpreted as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another, and whilst it will be important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about any individual request, the normality will be that requests will be refused. The aim is to ensure that every child gets their full entitlement to education – every missed lesson is a missed learning opportunity. We will be writing a new school attendance policy in order to reflect this new legislation.

I am aware that this is a contentious issue for many families who struggle to afford holidays not in term time, but I must ask that you respect these new regulations under which we must now work. If you do need to take your child out of school during term time, you need to make very clear in your request **how** the circumstances are exceptional. If this is not clear then under the new legislation, leave will not be granted. We are currently drafting a new form to be completed when making such requests. We will, of course, honour any absence requests that have already been signed as agreed, last term. Forms which have been sent to the school office, but not yet authorised by the Headteacher, will be covered legally by the new regulations, as parents are not supposed to book holidays until they have received their request form back, duly authorised.

In addition to this new legislation, there are also new regulations which have come in from September in which the imposition of penalty fines for parents and carers taking children out of school in unauthorised circumstances will now be imposed more strictly. You should also be aware that the rates and the timings of imposition of penalty fines will also become more stringent. You can find out more information on:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

I understand that this is very difficult in such financial times, but the new regulations and our responsibilities are very clear. I appreciate your understanding in this matter.

With best wishes

Cathy Higgins
Academy Principal



OXLEY PARK ACADEMY

REQUEST FOR LEAVE DURING TERM TIME

➤ **Holidays during term time - what the law says**

We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term-time leave for their child however, the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and come into force from 1st September 2013.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Requests for leave of absence will not normally be granted for the purposes of a holiday. The law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Headteachers have the discretion to authorise leave in **exceptional** circumstances and it is for the Headteacher 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 can use for any activities other than school.

➤ **How do schools consider term time leave requests?**

In assessing an application for term-time leave for the purposes of a family holiday, the following factors will be considered by the headteacher:

- **Previous Attendance - minimum 97% attendance** is required for the previous 12 months
- **Previous Term Time Leave** - one full academic year with no leave requests must have passed
- **Assessments and Testing – Reception and Year 1** have an assessment period from April to June (*leave will not be authorised in any circumstances during this time*)
Year 2 and Year 6 have Statutory Assessment Tests/Tasks which they are routinely assessed against throughout the year (*leave will not be authorised for children in Year 2 or in Year 6*)
- **Time of Year** – Leave will not be authorised for any pupil at the beginning of the academic year
- **Retrospective Applications** – Requests must be made in advance or the absence cannot legally be authorised
- **Academic Concerns** – Leave will not be granted where there are concerns regarding a pupil's learning and progress, as time out of school will certainly be to the pupil's detriment

➤ **How do I request leave for my child/ren?**

- All requests **must** be made at least two weeks in advance to the Headteacher.
- A parent/guardian who the child lives with 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 if the request will be authorised or not. (Do not book until authorised!)
- **If leave is granted and you are travelling abroad you will need to supply confirmation of your return flight tickets, such as bringing a copy of the flight tickets into the school office for us to copy.**
- If a leave request has not been authorised and the leave is still taken, this will be recorded as **unauthorised absence** and may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued. (£60 per parent, per child)
- Extended leave requests of more than 10 days will **not** be authorised and an appointment must be made to speak to the headteacher regarding such an application.
- If absence reaches 20 days then a child's name may be removed from the school roll.

Please complete all details in full:

You will receive a response by the Friday at the end of the week during which your request has been submitted

Child/ren's Name/s:..... Class/es:.....

Dates of leave: From..... To..... Number of school days.....

Please give details of the reason for requesting leave during term time below, or attach a separate sheet:

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Signed..... Parent/Guardian Date.....