



# **POLICY FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE DURING TERM TIME**

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he/ she is a registered pupil. Failure to fulfil this duty may result in the Local Authority prosecuting the parents and a penalty notice may be issued.

Absence during term time interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in school. We actively discourage parents from arranging leave of absence during term time and will only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances.

Parents do not have any right or entitlement to expect term time leave to be granted and all leave is granted at the discretion of the headteacher. If leave is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised absence and the matter will be shared with the school's education welfare officer.

The head reserves the right to make individual judgements as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances, which might include the following:

- A parent or grandparent is seriously/terminally ill and the leave proposed is likely to be the last such holiday;
- There has recently been a death or other significant trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate leave might help the child concerned better deal with the situation;
- The leave is a unique one off never to be repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested.

As a rule, the financial factor when a parent claims that they are unable to afford a holiday during school holidays when prices may be significantly higher than in term time, will not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Similarly, the nature of the proposed leave should not be taken as exceptional circumstances, although again, it is acknowledged that the head teacher will consider each request on an individual basis.

When making a decision whether to grant exceptional leave the following factors will be considered

- A child's attendance record
- Reasons for previous absences
- The timing of the request for exceptional leave

**APPENDIX 1 Copy of the Letter to Request Exceptional Leave**