

## PUPIL ABSENCE REQUEST FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Absence during term-time as a result of holidays interrupts continuity of teaching and learning; disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in schools. Cambridgeshire schools and the County Council aim to minimize the amount of time lost to term-time holidays through a policy which actively discourages parents from arranging family holidays during term time and supports schools to authorise absence for such holidays only in **exceptional** circumstances. There are only 190 statutory school days in one year and 175 (including weekends and school holidays) available for use for holidays.

Parents are reminded that they **do not** have any entitlement to term-time leave for their children. Schools will not agree to authorise leave for holidays or extended visits overseas during term-time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** which warrant this. Permission will not be given if it is applied for after the holiday or visit has taken place. When the **exceptional** circumstances are met it can only be for a **single absence** in any one school year, up to a maximum of 10 school days.

### Guidelines.

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013) to prohibit the Head Teacher of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Head Teacher considers that there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application. **The expectation of the Local Authority is that term time holidays should not be planned or booked as a matter of course as they will be unauthorised and will lead to the issuing of a penalty notice (fine).**

### Exceptional Circumstances are defined as:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting.
- Exceptional significant family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis with you, for example; a significant trauma in a family or a close relative is seriously ill.

### The following do not meet the above criteria:

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends that have different half term holidays and may include refusal to attend family weddings and visits to see family abroad.

**The Local Authority have the discretion to issue a penalty notice without warning where the parent has chosen to take the child on leave during term time for 3 school days or more without authorisation.**

### Penalty Notices.

Through section 444A and section 444B of the Education Act 1996, it has become possible that certain cases of unauthorized absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. The current Penalty Notice requires each parent of a child (of compulsory school age whose attendance has been unsatisfactory), to pay. This is currently £60.00 (if paid within 21 days) or £120.00 (if paid within 28 days) per child, per parent.

If you do not pay the Penalty Notice, such cases you will be automatically summonsed to appear in Court for an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 and this can result in a criminal conviction recorded against you.

Courts have a wider range of sentencing options, which would include a maximum fine of up to £1,000.

The only statutory defences to the offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 are if:

- The child was absent for proven medical reasons
- The LEA failed to provide transport when required to do so
- The absences were due to religious observance
- You had permission from the school or there was an unavoidable cause

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Parents do not have the right to withdraw pupils from school, and, in law, have to apply for permission in advance. The school may want to discuss this with you further. Please complete this form and send to the Head Teacher. You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered by the school.

Any absence that has not been agreed in advance by the Head Teacher will be marked as 'unauthorised absence' and may result in involvement of the Education Welfare Officer or possible legal proceedings in the form of a Penalty Notice being issued (see overleaf).

I request that \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Child) \_\_\_\_\_ (Year Group & Class)

be granted leave of absence from \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of School)

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (Dates)

I acknowledge that there are no exceptional circumstances for this absence and this will be an unauthorised absence and I/We **will** be liable to a Penalty Notice Fine from the Local Authority if the leave is for 3 school days or more.

(Please Tick)

I believe the exceptional reason why the absence needs to be taken in term time is:

*(you may wish to discuss this with the school first).*

I have children at another school: Bottisham Village College / Soham Village College / Other

Signature of Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Carer *(please print)* \_\_\_\_\_

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## THIS SECTION TO BE RETURNED TO PARENTS/CARERS

Thank you for your request made for the pupil(s) below to be absent from school under exceptional circumstances. A decision on this absence is shown below:

Pupils Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Year/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

**Absence Unauthorised**

**Absence Authorised** from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below an acceptable level.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Head Teacher)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_