



# Surrey Street Primary School

## Leave of Absence Policy



The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and come into force from 1st September 2013. The amendments remove references to 'holiday' from school and extended leave of absence as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The new regulations state that:

**Head Teachers have been advised not to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of absence should 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.**

School days are precious; children only attend school 190 out of 365 days. There are 175 days a year which parents can use for activities other than school.

Head Teachers have the discretion to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and it is only for the Head Teacher to determine what is truly exceptional.

Luton Education Welfare Services suggest these constitute **exceptional circumstances**:

- Close family member bereavement (up to 3 days) i.e. parent or sibling
- Immediate family member (i.e. parent, sibling, grandparent) wedding
- Immediate family member funeral
- Unavoidable delay in travel arrangements due to adverse weather conditions e.g. volcanic ash
- Proven parental employment restrictions.
- Unavoidable delay in travel due to being deemed unfit to travel by medical practitioner, with proof provided to the school for the period of absence. (This presupposes that some leave has already been granted).

**Exceptional leave of absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:**

- Pupil's attendance is less than 97% in the previous 12 months
- During SATs or in a public examination year
- In a transition year (year 6)
- At the beginning of any academic year
- Retrospectively
- If there are any other attendance concerns such as poor punctuality
- If leave of absence has already been taken in the same school year

**Examples of non-exceptional circumstances:**

The following examples are not reasons to authorise term-time leave:

- Going on holiday
- Preference of holiday dates or availability of cheap holidays/accommodation
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Preference for undergoing medical treatment abroad
- Relatives getting married overseas
- Religious events (for religious observations please refer to the religious observance guidance)
- Poor weather conditions at certain times
- Alternative travel arrangements not being fully utilised, resulting in a delay in returning to school

## Applications for Leave of absence

Requests for exceptional leave of absence should be made on the appropriate form available from the school office

Requests must be made in advance or the absence cannot legally be authorised. All requests must be made at least two weeks in advance to the Head Teacher by completing the school application form. A parent/adult with whom the child resides 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 the parent will receive a written response confirming if the request will be authorised or not.

**If leave is granted and you are travelling abroad you will need to supply us with confirmation of your return flight tickets, such as bringing a copy of the flight tickets into the school office for us to copy.**

## Unauthorised Absence

If you take your child out of school without the school's prior authorisation, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (which is illegal) and noted in your child's school records. **Where a parent/carer has taken their child on leave of absence during term time for 5 consecutive school days or more, without the Head Teacher's authorisation, Luton Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice. In these circumstances a warning will not be given.** Penalty Notices are per parent, per child as appropriate, so if there are 2 parents both will need to pay the fine. From 1 September 2013 penalty notices will need to be paid within 21 days at £60 or £120 within 28 days. Unpaid Penalty Notices will be progressed to the Magistrates' Court for their consideration.

## Failure to return to school on the date expected

If there is a reason which delays the pupil in returning to school the parent/guardian must inform the school immediately. The school will require evidence of this issue and will then decide whether the absence will be authorised. For any travel arrangements outside of the UK, we require proof of return flights, prior to the leave being taken. This may prevent you from receiving unauthorised absence for your child and being fined if they are unable to return on the date expected. Each case will be assessed individually and medical evidence from abroad will not be accepted routinely as evidence that a pupil was unable to attend school.

## Roll Removal

If, after ten days of continuous absence, the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will refer the child's details to the Local Authority for it to perform further checks that are not available to school. If after 20 days continuous unauthorised absence, their whereabouts cannot be traced, they will be removed from the school roll.

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