

Bowness on Solway School Policy Regarding Term Time Leave of Absence

1. Introduction

It is a legal requirement for children to attend school. The school places great importance on attendance. High attendance leads to high achievement. From 1st September 2013 legislation prohibits any school from authorising leave of absence, including holidays, except in exceptional circumstances.

It is therefore illegal to take children out of school during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to any leave of absence during term time. Schools are in session for 38 weeks per year, so there are opportunities to take children on holiday during the remaining 14 weeks.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on:

- a) What might be defined as exceptional circumstances
- b) Procedures for applying for leave of absence for holiday
- c) The criteria the school will use in deciding whether to refer any unauthorised absence due to holidays in term time to the Local Authority to issue a fixed penalty

2. Criteria for Exceptional Circumstances

It is not possible to define all exceptional circumstances, but examples of what might be considered as such are:

- a) Where it is company /organisation policy for an employee to take leave of absence at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be supported by documentary evidence from the organisation.**
- b) Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad**
- c) Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional issues. Evidence must be provided, from a qualified professional, such as a doctor**

Where there are other factors which the headteacher may consider to be exceptional circumstances, this may be referred to the Local Authority for advice.

3. PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING

- a) Applications for leave of absence should always be made in advance using the correct form (Appendix 1). Forms can be obtained from the school office or the school website. They should be returned to the school office or emailed to *head@bowness-on-solway.cumbria.sch.uk*
- b) The exceptional circumstances to explain why a leave of absence must be taken during in term time should clearly be stated.
- c) The headteacher will decide whether the leave of absence can be authorised and will contact the parent to inform them of the outcome
- d) Even where there are exceptional circumstances no leave of absence will be granted during any period of external exams such as SAT's which are usually mid – May.
- e) Multiple or conflicting requests from separated parents or other relatives such as grandparents will not be considered.

4. CONSEQUENCES OF TAKING AN UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Taking leave of absence without authorisation will have an impact on a child's learning. Parents who choose to take an unauthorised leave of absence must accept that this will have an adverse effect on their child's educational achievement. The school may therefore ask the Local Authority to issue a fixed penalty notice where an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken. The fixed penalty fine is collected by the Local Authority, not the school.

Unless there are exceptional circumstance a fixed penalty fine will be issued:

- a) When the leave of absence causes the child's attendance to fall below 90% in the previous twelve months
- b) When there has been a previous unauthorised leave of absence in the same academic year of 5 or more days

BOWNESS ON SOLWAY SCHOOL

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

NAME OF PUPIL/S	
PARENT(S) FULL NAME	
ADDRESS	
<u>REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE</u>	
DATE OF FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE	
DATE OF LAST DAY OF ABSENCE	
RETURN TO SCHOOL DATE	
NAME OF ADULT(S) ACCOMPANYING PUPIL/S	
RELATIONSHIP TO PUPIL/S	
Explanation of exceptional circumstances. Please note that where it is the only time a parent can take a holiday due to their place of work, a signed statement from the employer confirming this should be attached to the form. If there are medical reasons a signed statement from a health professional is needed.	
Signed:..... Date:.....	

DATE RECEIVED	
AUTHORISED	
NOT AUTHORISED	
SIGNED	
DATE:	

THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO SCHOOL AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE REQUESTED DATES.