

St John's Church of England Academy

Fenby Avenue - Darlington - DL1 4UB

Tel: 01325 380725



Application for leave of Absence during Term Time

NAME OF CHILD(REN):		YEAR GROUP(s):
Name of Parent/Carer:		
First Day of Absence:	Last Day of Absence:	
Total number of days of absence from school:		
Reason for application (please give sufficient detail to inform decision making):		
Signature of Parent/Carer:		Date:

RESPONSE FORM

Attendance to date (current academic year):	Previous year attendance:
Leave of absence AUTHORISED by: Headteacher	Leave of absence UNAUTHORISED by: Headteacher
Date:	
Comments:	

Please submit this form to the Headteacher prior to booking any holiday. Your request will be considered and you will receive a response within 8 school days of receipt.

Leave of Absence Requests

New regulations for taking holidays in term time

The Department for Education has made amendments to the regulations which previously allowed Headteachers' the discretion to grant holidays taken during term time. The new regulations come into force from 1st September 2013 and we have had to revise our school policy based upon the new government legislation which states, in summary, that:

- The current law does not give parents any entitlement to take their children out of school for a holiday during term time.
- Any application for leave must only be in '**exceptional**' circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are 'exceptional' and warrant the granting of leave.
- In 'exceptional' circumstances, a **request for absence must be made in advance**, to the Headteacher, who will inform you of the decision **prior** to booking your holiday.
- If a request for leave is not authorised by the Headteacher and the pupil goes on holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, which then stays on the child's permanent record.

We are required by law to report unauthorised absences to the Local Authority, who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice, which means a parent may be fined by the Education Welfare Service. The regulations do stipulate that fixed penalty fines will be issued and from 1st September 2013 parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Due to equalities legislation, fixed penalty notices will now be issued to **all parents who have parental responsibility and whom can be traced**. This means that both the father and mother of a child will receive separate fines, under the new regulations, and that each parent will incur a fine for each child. Please be aware that the proceeds from the fixed penalty fines DO NOT go to the school.

The Government have not yet provided clear guidance about the definition of 'exceptional' circumstances and what is considered to be 'exceptional' for one person may not be seen as such by another. Some examples which we are aware of are:

- The fact that a holiday is cheaper during term time is unlikely to be considered as 'exceptional' circumstances
- 'Exceptional' circumstances are more likely to be unique and/or 'one-off' situations. eg: due to a parent's work/employment commitments. NB: Proof may be required from an employer in such circumstances.
- Where there has been a trauma or bereavement in the family or where the opportunity for such a holiday is highly unlikely to arise in the future.

As a result of this legislation, any decision to grant leave will be made by our attendance panel using the following criteria:

- The individual circumstances as to why the holiday is being requested in term time.
- The child's attendance record and percentage of absences.
- The age of the child and the time of year proposed for the holiday.
- The child's attainment and progress.

N.B. Any requests for leave during September will not be authorised as this is an important time for settling into a new class/school. Similarly, leave of absence will not be authorised for year 6 pupils in the term prior to SATS or the weeks leading up to them.

Governors anticipate the strength of feeling this information will generate, firstly because of the short notice by which it has been introduced and the implications arising from it. However, schools are required to operate within Government regulations and we have no option but to change our policies and procedures accordingly.

If you have already booked a holiday for the next academic year and have submitted a leave of absence form to school, please contact the school as soon as possible. In cases where proof is provided that the holiday was booked prior to these changes being announced, we will authorise the holiday on this occasion. All new applications for leave will be considered using the criteria outlined above.

Further information and guidance can be found on the DFE website www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance. I hope that we can rely upon your support in this matter and I will keep you informed of any future development and provide you with further information as it becomes available.