



Together we succeed; Today we achieve

Leave of Absence in Term Time

The education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013, removed references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the possibility of ten school days authorised absence. The amendments made clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' exist. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Head teachers will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy should be that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

The regulations also stated that head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted for 'exceptional circumstances'.

Within New Marske Primary School absence is categorised in two ways: authorised or unauthorised.

Examples of Authorised Absence

- genuine illness of a pupil
- hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil
- major religious observances
- visits to prospective new schools
- external exams or educational assessments

Unauthorised absences

are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

Examples of Unauthorised Absence

- Family holiday, except in exceptional circumstances
- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get an attendance mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

If you decide apply for a leave of absence you should:

- ◆ complete this form. A letter can also be used to support this application.
- ◆ give one-month notice, where possible.
- ◆ be a parent with whom the child normally resides.

Only the Head teacher, at his or her discretion, can authorise these absences. The Head teacher will consider:

- ◆ The reason for the leave of absence, assessing whether the absence falls into the category of 'exceptional circumstances'.
- ◆ Whether the absence is unavoidable
- ◆ Your child's record of attendance
- ◆ Any previous term time leave

If the Headteacher refuses your request for term time leave and you still take your child out of school, this will be recorded as **unauthorised** absence and it will be noted on your child's Record of Achievement.

In these circumstances, the school is required to inform the Education Welfare Service. The Attendance and Welfare Manager will consider ALL the circumstances and a Penalty Notice may be issued. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 per parent per child if paid between 1-28 days after issue, increasing to £120 if paid between 29-42 days. Penalty Notices are issued to parents for each child taken out of school for an unauthorised absence.

Application for Leave of absence

Name of child: Class:

Name of child: Class:

Address:
.....

Reason for leave of absence:

Dates of absence: from to (inclusive)

Signature of parent/carer Date:

*(This form should be completed by the person with parental responsibility for the child and submitted to the Head teacher **before** any leave is taken).*

For Office Use Only

Number of school days absent:

Attendance information for previous 12 months: number of days authorised absence
..... number of days unauthorised absence
.....% Overall attendance

- The application for Leave of Absence for ____ days has been authorised.
- The application for Leave of Absence for ____ days has **not** been authorised for the following reason(s):

.....
.....

Signed: (Head teacher) Date:

- ◆ Where the Head teacher has agreed to a Leave of Absence, this will be recorded as **AUTHORISED** absence.
- ◆ In all other cases, this will be recorded as **UNAUTHORISED** absence. Unauthorised absences can be referred to the Educational Welfare Service and may incur penalty fines.