



Holidays in Term Time Policy and Procedure

Policy

The Trust is committed to maintaining an overall attendance of 95% or above in line with OfSTED guidelines. Regular attendance at school is at the heart of the Every Child Matters agenda and the drive to raise attainment. "A holiday is an absence."

There are 190 statutory school days a year; so there are 175 other days (weekends and school holidays) available for holidays which would not have a negative effect on a child's education.

For this reason, and in line with new regulations coming into force on 1st September 2013, no leave of absence will be authorised in term time except in very exceptional circumstances.

"Every day, half-day and lesson matters."

What the Law says

Amendments to the 2006 regulations mean that the Head teacher/Principal no longer has the discretion to allow absence for a family holiday or extended leave and the previous statutory threshold of ten school days has been removed. The amendments make clear that Head teachers/Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers/Principals should determine the number of days a child can be away from the academy if the leave is granted. A copy of Department for Education's guidance can be found:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

Procedure

All academies should inform parents of the change in regulations. A sample letter for this purpose is in Appendix 1.

Following an application for a term time leave of absence, the Head teacher/Principal or member of the senior leadership team should initiate a discussion with parents/carers in order to accurately assess the request and outline the wider implications. This can also include the academy's named governor for attendance.

If a leave of absence is taken without the academy's permission or if a child fails to return by the agreed date, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted on the child's records. If a child has not returned within 10 days of the expected date of return, then the academy may take the child off roll, after consultation with the named Education Welfare Officer.

If a pupil's attendance continues to be an issue, having taken a leave of absence during term time, the academy can consider a variety of initiatives, one of which may be a penalty notice. The penalty



notice fine has increased to £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 28 days. If a penalty notice is not paid, there may be a prosecution in court.

Some advice on ways to emphasise the importance of full attendance follows in Appendix 2.

Accountability

Academy Principals hold delegated responsibility for discharging the sound application of all Trust policies.

In accordance with the Trust's terms of reference, the Chief Executive Officer has delegated responsibility for direct line management of Academy Principals and day to day oversight of the Local Governing Body of each Academy.

Therefore, should the subject of the application of this policy be the Academy Principal, the CEO will be responsible for discharging the relevant policy.

In addition, Academy Principals should inform the CEO of all matters relating to serious breaches of this code of conduct including any major incident to be addressed under this policy promptly and preferably prior to action being taken insofar as is reasonably practicable.

Policy Status

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

The Trust may alter or adapt this Policy, and any components of it, at any time provided it notifies the Chairs of the Local Governing Bodies.



Appendix 1

Sample Letter

Dear Parents / Carers

I am writing to inform you of some important government changes coming in to effect on 1 September 2013.

The following amendments from the Department for Education relate to school attendance:

'The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.'

'Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.' Those fines can range from between £60 and £120 and are payable within 28 days.

It follows that, from 1st September 2013, xxx Academy cannot issue holiday request forms as a matter of course. Absences will only be granted for exceptional circumstances with approval from the Headteacher/Principal and Governors. This request must be put in writing and a meeting arranged to discuss the matter further. These changes have arisen due to the fact that we obliged to maintain our overall percentage of attendance at above 95%.

If your child has persistent absences due to illness or has an unexplained absence we will require confirmation via a doctor's note.

Please sign and return the slip below to confirm that you have read and understood these changes.

For further information please see the link below to the government Department for Education.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

Yours faithfully

xxxxx

Headteacher

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xxx Academy Attendance Guidelines

Child's Name..... Class.....

I have read and understood the above information regarding the changes in attendance guidelines coming into effect on 1 September 2013.

Parent/Carer's Signature

Please print name.....

Date.....



Appendix 2

Advice on ways to highlight the importance of full attendance

- A regular sharing of pupil level data on attendance and specifically at discussion before potential absence can inform decisions and outcomes. The need to reinforce the link between attendance and attainment is paramount for all stakeholders
- A simple leaflet distributed to all Parents/Carers indicating implications of term time holiday and outlining term dates and other significant events in the school calendar can assist in keeping the attendance agenda high. Newsletters/notice boards/websites are other forums that can be used to give regular updates
- Circle Time, group work sessions or tutor time can be used for pupils to explore potential difficulties of returning to the academy both academically and emotionally following an absence. A quote from a pupil who has experienced difficulty to renew friendships or catch up with work on returning to school can be very powerful
- Use of SEAL (Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning) approaches are helpful to engage learners and parents alike and to strengthen the climate for learning