

Earlsmead Primary School

Leave of Absence Policy (Pupils)

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| Policy summary | The Summary of actions and timeline for what needs to take place if a parent or family wants to leave of absence during term time. |
| Affects | Pupils, Parents & Carers |
| Drafted by | Sarah Drummond |
| Approved by | Headteacher |
| Last approved revision date | February 2022 |
| Next review date | February 2023 |
| Related policies, procedures and forms | Attendance 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. **Head Teachers may not grant any 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. 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. School days are precious; children only attend school 190 out of 365 days. There are 175 days a year which parents can use for any activities other than school.

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 other public examination years
- In year 2 and 6
- In a transition year
- At the beginning of any academic year
- Retrospectively
- If there are any other academic concerns such as poor punctuality, pupil's ability to catch up on the work missed etc.
- If leave of absence has already been taken in the same school year

We will also take into account the following:

- The pupil's general absence / attendance record, e.g. Unauthorised absence
- Proximity of SATs and public examinations
- Amount of time requested
- Age of the pupil
- Length of the proposed leave
- Pupil's ability to catch up on the work
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Frequency of the activity; and
- When the request was made

Applications for Leave of absence

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 must make the application even though the pupil may not be taking the proposed leave with them. The form must be fully completed and you 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 reception 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. Leave of absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher.

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, Haringey Local Authority may 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, could result in prosecution for the absence in the magistrate's court.

The school makes the decision as to whether the request for leave should be granted or not and the Local Authority makes the decision to impose a penalty for this.

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

A Pupil can be removed from roll in either of these circumstances:

- If you take your child on leave of absence which has been authorised by the school but your child fails to return on the agreed date, any extra time absent from school will be counted as unauthorised. If your child fails to return within ten days of the expected date of return then the school may notify the Local Authority accordingly.
- Or, if your child has 20 days continuous unauthorised absence the school will notify the L.A and your child's school place may be at risk.