

Cheapside CE Primary School



Leave of Absence in Term Time Policy

Introduction:

The staff and Governors of Cheapside CE Primary School are committed to providing the finest education possible. We believe that this can be achieved, with the support of parents by ensuring that holidays are not taken in school time. Absence during term-time for any reasons interrupts the continuity of teaching and learning – disrupting the educational progress of pupils.

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of all aspects of school life, acquire the skills they need and develop good habits.

There is a clear correlation between regular attendance and achievement; as attendance deteriorates, so will performance and achievement.

Our Aims

To encourage parents to support their children in achieving 100% attendance

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013

The Amended regulations include the following:

Leave of absence shall not be granted unless –

- An application has been made in advance to the Head Teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and
- The Head Teacher considers the leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

Implications for schools are:

- Any absence requested by a parent should be referred to as ‘leave of absence’.
- Only applications made in advance may be considered
- Headteachers are prohibited from granting leave of absence except in ‘exceptional circumstances’
- Reference to ‘holiday’ absence has been removed

It is only the school, within the context of the law (Section 199 of the Education Act 1993), which can approve absences in “exceptional” circumstances, **NOT** the parents/carers.

Term Dates

The school holiday dates are published each year in advance and parents/carers should only book their family holidays during school holidays.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

The question of authorised and unauthorised absence is a fairly recent issue and to help parents distinguish between the two the following guidelines are included. If after reading these guidelines you are still in doubt please contact the Headteacher.

Authorised Absences

- a) **Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments** - If the school is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence will be treated as authorised. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (i.e. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parents (either in person, in writing or by a telephone call) or on production of an appointments card. A book is maintained by the School Office for the purpose of recording pupils leaving or returning to the site during the school day. Parents are encouraged to make appointments after school. Where this is not possible, pupils must return to school after the appointment if it is in the morning or if the afternoon, they are to come to school in the morning. Failure to do so will result in an unauthorised absence.
- b) **Family Bereavements** - The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. Schools have discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.
- c) **Days of Religious Observance** - Absence of a pupil for participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observation by the religious body to which the parents belong is classified as authorised absence. It is expected that the School will be given advance notice of religious observance days.
- d) **Excluded pupils**
- e) **Exceptional Circumstances**
The Head teacher & Governors may authorise other circumstances they consider to be “exceptional”:

Unauthorised Absences

a) Holidays in Term Time

Headteachers are prohibited from granting leave of absence except in exceptional circumstances.

b) Absences not considered as “special” or “exceptional” circumstances

The following are examples of absences that will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- The prospect of better weather
- Looking after the home, brothers and sisters
- Shopping during School hours
- Leaving school early to avoid traffic
- Birthdays or a Day Out with the family

Additional Information

Cheapside CE Primary School will ensure that all parents/carers receive a copy of this Leave of Absence in Term Time Policy which forms part of the school attendance policy.

Parents/carers will be required to complete a “Leave of Absence request form”, available from the School Office.

Parents/carers may be required to attend an interview with the Head teacher to discuss their request for a Leave of Absence.

Parents/carers will normally be notified of the outcome of their application for an authorised Leave of Absence within 10 school days of the application.

Where an absence is not deemed to be “Exceptional”, by the school, the request will be declined. If the absence still goes ahead it will be regarded as an unauthorised absence.

Where a pupil is taken out of school for the purpose of a holiday in term time, the parent/carer of the pupil may be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer.



Cheapside CE Primary School

Appendix 1 – copy of Leave of Absence Request Form

Please complete and return this form to the school office **at least 3 weeks** prior 3 weeks in advance of the first day of absence and/or PRIOR to making any arrangements ie. booking flights.

To: Mrs Searle, Headteacher

Name of Pupil _____

Class _____

Date of Birth _____

Address _____

I wish to request authorisation for my child to be absent from school from (date) ____/____/____ to ____/____/____. He/she will return to school on ____/____/____. The total number of days absence requested is _____.

Please attach a letter to the Headteacher explaining the reason for the absence request.

I have read and understood the School’s Leave of Absence in Term Time Policy.

I understand that keeping my child off school if my request is not granted, will result in the absence being recorded as Unauthorised.

Parent/Carer Signature: _____

Date: _____

For school use only:

Attendance %.....

Yes/No*

Arrange to meet with parent/carer*Yes/No*

Approved/Reject*

Letter sent – Date:.....

Previous Leave this Academic Year

No of days.....

*Delete as appropriate

Cheapside CE Primary School Leave of Absence in Term Time Policy September 2013
Appendix 2 – sample letter to parents/carers

Dear Parent/Carer

Regular school attendance is essential if your child is to maximise their educational opportunities available to them. Interruptions in school attendance not only disrupt your child's education; it also makes it harder to catch up on work missed and it can also affect their social life within school.

It is the school's responsibility to provide the best education possible. We can only do this if your child/ren attends regularly.

In recent years there have been increasing requests for holidays in term time as parents and carers believe that pupils are automatically allowed 10 days holiday from school in any one year – this is not the case. The Government's guidance states that only under **exceptional** circumstances the Head Teacher **may** consider permission for a child to be absent from school.

In line with national and local guidance we have reviewed our policy and the new attendance and Leave of Absence policies will apply from September 2013. Copies are attached and are available on the school website.

The main changes to these policies are:

- Headteachers are prohibited from granting leave of absence except in exceptional circumstances as outlined in the Leave of Absence Policy.
- Family holidays are not considered "Exceptional Circumstances".
- All requests for Special Absence in term time **MUST** be in writing on the Leave of Absence Request Form available from the school. The request should be made **BEFORE** any arrangements are made and /or at least 3 weeks in advance of the first day of absence. This will not be the case if a family bereavement has taken place.
- The granting of absence does not set a precedent for similar future requests and the frequency/duration of such leave periods will be considered as factors in any decision.
- Request will be considered by the Head teacher and Governors.
- The Local Authority may use the full range of sanctions where holidays are taken without the permission of the school.