



## STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Children and Life Long Learning Directorate

#### STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY PROTOCOL

#### Family Holiday Requests During Term Time

Holly Grove Primary School

The head teacher has the discretion to grant up to ten days authorised absence for family holidays in a school year. However, each application will be considered individually taking into account factors such as the timing of the holiday and the pupil's attendance (see Holiday Authorisation Calculator). For example, a pupil with an otherwise perfect attendance record will achieve a maximum of 94.7% attendance if s/he goes on a ten day holiday during term time. The legislation states that:

'...an application has been made in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides, the proprietor, or person authorised by the proprietor,..... considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the special circumstances relating to that application...Save in exceptional circumstances, a pupil shall not...be granted more than ten school days leave of absence in any school year.'

*The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 (SI 1751)*

In brief this means that:

- Parents **CANNOT** demand a leave of absence as an automatic right.
- Parental requests **MUST** be in writing.
- Schools **CANNOT** apply blanket policies to approve/reject all applications.
- All requests **MUST** be considered on their own merits.
- Extended periods of absence will be granted **ONLY** in exceptional circumstances.
- The power to authorise/unauthorise a leave of absence belongs to the head teacher.

In order to ensure equity within and between schools, decisions on whether or not to authorise a leave of absence for family holidays will be guided by the use of the Holiday Authorisation Calculator (B). This does not remove the head teacher's prerogative to authorise holiday in exceptional circumstances.

#### Procedure

Parent/carer should complete a holiday request form (A) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the intended period of absence; school will respond to the request within one week. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support should be offered to the parent/carer.

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The Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart (B) should be used to guide the head teacher's decision on whether or not to authorise the requested leave of absence.

- If the total score is 7 or less holiday leave may be authorised.
- If the total score is 8 or more holiday leave should not be authorised. However, the head teacher may be aware of exceptional circumstances which would warrant approving holiday leave and this should be recorded on the form.
- If a pupil has already taken ten days holiday leave in the same academic year further holiday leave should not be authorised.
- If the Local Authority has begun legal proceedings (i.e has sent an Advisory letter) holiday should not be authorised and this should be recorded on the form.
- Parents should be made aware (perhaps in the school handbook) that holidays which have not been agreed in advance will lead to the pupil being marked with unauthorised absences and that this may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or other action.

A letter confirming that the request has been authorised/denied (C/D) should be sent to the parent/carer, with a copy of the Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart (B) within one week of receipt of the holiday request.

- Pupil should be marked H (authorised absence) for the agreed period of holiday leave.
- Pupil should be marked G (unauthorised absence) in the register if the holiday absences have **NOT** been authorised by the school or for days taken in excess of an agreed period.

### Family Holidays and Extended Trips Overseas

Sometimes parents may wish to take their children on extended overseas holidays during term-time. Such visits are particularly important to parents who want to ensure that their children meet members of their extended family overseas. While it is important to recognise the educational and cultural significance of such visits, DCFS guidelines make clear that leave of absence for more than two weeks during term-time should be regarded as **exceptional** and "blanket approval" policies are not acceptable. It is expected that parents will put forward a convincing case to justify such absence. When considering a request for extended leave during term time the following factors may be relevant, in addition to those on the Holiday Calculator, but this list should not be regarded as comprehensive:

- the nature and purpose of the trip;
- the duration of the trip and its impact on the child's education, particularly in terms of the continuity of learning
- the circumstances of the family, the wishes of the parents and their cultural traditions;
- the distance to be travelled and the expense involved
- the overall attendance pattern of the pupil.

Where holidays of more than two weeks are planned, to visit family members living overseas, schools may find it helpful to discuss with parents the most appropriate time of year and point in the pupil's educational career for the visit, so that it can be timed to minimise the effects on the continuity of the pupil's education. In cases

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where approval is given for such a holiday, schools may wish to consider making up a study pack or setting assignments for the pupil concerned to complete while s/he is away.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 state that where a pupil has been granted extended leave of absence and subsequently fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence, and the failure is not due to sickness or any other unavoidable cause, his/her name may, following consultation with the Local Authority, be deleted from the admission register. The implications of this and the difficulties of admission to oversubscribed groups should be made clear to the family.

It is important that schools show an understanding of the parents' perspective even though they may not be able to comply with a request for absence. In discussing absence with parents (whether before or after the event) schools should show that they have taken account of the following:-

- a visit involving family overseas has an entirely different significance to that of the normal associations with a 'holiday'.
- visits may be very important in terms of the pupil's identity and self-esteem as they grow up.
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweighs the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school -maintaining family links (in extended family situations) may involve greater significance and greater pressures in some societies than it does currently in many western societies.
- the reasons for parents making a visit may be similar to those for indigenous parents e.g. family illness, bereavement, family business, maintaining family contacts etc.

If absence is agreed the school should:

- confirm agreement in writing (letter E).
- seek to establish, and make explicit if appropriate, the potential educational value of the visit .
- explain what work the child will miss in school, how it can be made up on return if necessary, and how the parents could help the child
- enquire whether work can be given for the child to do (with parental support) while s/he is away
- prepare a study pack
- ask the pupil to make notes/observations in relation to a class topic (current or for the following term)
- go through any work that has been done by the pupil on return
- share the experience of the visit in a positive way with other children and the class teacher on return.
- inform parent/carer of the possibility of the pupil's removal from the school roll if the pupil does not return within ten days of the agreed date and no reasonable explanation is forthcoming.

### Registration Marks

**H** = Holiday leave is authorised (authorised absence).

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**G** = Holiday leave is not authorised (unauthorised absence). This mark should be used for holiday absences that have **NOT** been authorised by the school or for days taken in excess of an agreed period.

**F** = Extended family holiday leave is authorised (authorised absence).

### Notes to Appendices

#### A – Family Holiday Request

- All requests for holiday leave should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the holiday period requested.
- If request is for an extended period (i.e. three weeks or more) parents/carers will be invited in to school to discuss the request.

#### B - Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart

- This should be completed by a senior member of staff.
- 'Mitigation' may be identified by the 'Reason for term time holiday request' on the parental request form, or there may be other information available to the school that impacts on the decision.
- Score is 1 to 7 holiday may be approved.
- Score is 8 or more holiday should not be authorised except at the discretion of head teacher for exceptional circumstances.

#### C - Standard Letter – Holiday Leave Approved

- Parents/carers should receive a response to their request within one week of the application.
- Letter should be accompanied by a copy of the completed Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart (B).

#### D - Standard Letter – Holiday Leave Denied

- Parents/carers should receive a response to their request within one week of the application.
- Letter should be accompanied by a copy of the completed Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart (B).
- This letter may also be used if denying authorisation for extended holiday leave.

#### E - Standard Letter – Extended Holiday Leave Approved

- Letter sent confirming discussion held with the parent/carer.
- Arrange study pack/work project.
- If request for extended leave is denied use letter D and expand on reasons.



Holly Grove Primary School  
 Holly Grove Lane  
 Chase Terrace  
 WS7 1LU

## APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR PARENTAL HOLIDAY

Full name of child(ren)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for application and dates

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Office use only

Request seen by Head Teacher/Head of Year Y/N

Agreement reached Y/N

Current Att %

Other outcome

Date / /

The head teacher will consider the following points before authorising leave

1. The child's previous attendance history.
2. The age of the child(ren).
3. The child's stage of education.
4. The time of year (SATS or exams).
5. The nature of the trip (an exceptional experience).
6. Holiday already taken/granted within current academic year.
7. Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave from their employer.

### Holly Grove Primary School Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart

Name of Pupil.....

The merits of each individual request should be evaluated by providing answers to ALL the following questions and scoring accordingly.

(\* Where the holiday already taken in the current academic year exceeds the DCSF guideline "i.e. maximum of 10 days in any academic year", any further requests should **NOT** be authorised.)

	Points Possible	Points
When is the holiday planned for?	September = 2pts May = 2pts Other dates = 1pt	
Pupil's attendance level is?  (Up until Autumn half term use the % figure from the previous year.)	Less than 70% = 5pts 70% to 80% = 4pts 80% to 85% = 3pts 85% to 93% = 2pts More than 93% = 1pt	
How close is the pupil to a SATs assessment or other examination?	Non-SATs/Exam Year = 1pt More than 16 wks = 1pt 8 – 16 weeks = 2pts 2 – 8 weeks = 3pts less than 2 weeks = 4pts	
How much holiday leave has already been authorised in current academic year?*	8 or more = 4pts 5 to 7 days = 3pts 2 to 4 days = 2pts 1 to 3 days = 1pt	
Subtotal		
Any special mitigating circumstances/aspects of the holiday which can be classed as part of that pupils curriculum requirements (& work set to satisfy these) as below:	Subtract 2 points from subtotal.	
Details of mitigation		
<b>Total</b>		

Leave for family holiday where the total is 8 or more **should NOT be authorised**

The only exception to the above may be where there are, in the opinion of the head teacher 'exceptional circumstances.' (incl. religious and cultural considerations; add comment in mitigation box). If the Local Authority has begun legal proceedings holiday should **NOT** be authorised.

**DELETE WHERE APPROPRIATE:-      REQUEST APPROVED / REQUEST DENIED**

Completed by..... Date.....



Date:

Dear

Thank you for your recent holiday request form.

I am able to confirm that on this occasion I am able to authorise your child's leave of absence from *date* to *date*, for the purpose of a family holiday.

Requests for holiday leave are never taken lightly and in taking this decision I have considered *name of pupil* overall level of attendance, academic attainment and the impact any leave may have on public examinations and tests (see attached form).

Please contact me to discuss a possible study pack or project outline that *child's name* can complete whilst away. I hope that you have a good holiday and that *name of pupil* finds it an interesting and stimulating experience.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. D. O'Hare

Headteacher



Dear

Thank you for your recent holiday request form.

On this occasion I am not able to authorise your child's leave of absence from *date* to *date*, for the purpose of a family holiday.

I have no wish to deprive families of a well earned family holiday but my first concern has to be the educational development of *pupil name*. Requests for holiday leave are never taken lightly and in taking this decision I have considered *name of pupil* overall level of attendance, academic attainment and the impact any leave may have on public examinations and tests (please see attached form).

If you decide to go ahead with your proposed holiday, *pupil name* absences will be marked as unauthorised. I should inform you that unauthorised absences are referred to the Local Authority who may under certain circumstance consider issuing you with a Penalty Notice or other legal action in relation to unauthorised absences.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please feel free to make an appointment to see me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. D. O'Hare

Headteacher



Dear

Further to our meeting on *date*.

I am able to confirm that on this occasion I am able to authorise your child's extended leave of absence from *date* to *date*.

Requests for extended holiday leave are only ever granted in exceptional circumstances. *Outline reason for authorisation*.

Please contact me to discuss a possible study pack or project outline that *child's name* can complete whilst away.

I look forward to *name of pupil* returning on *date* and hope that *name of pupil* finds it an interesting and stimulating experience.

I must remind you that if *name of pupil* does not return to school within ten school days of the agreed date, without reasonable cause, *name of pupil* may be removed from the school roll.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. D. O'Hare

Headteacher