

ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Dear Parent/Carer



Good school attendance of all our children is very important. Children who miss even just a few days of school can easily fall behind and can sometimes find it hard to settle back in. We want all our children to attend school regularly so that they can make the most of the educational opportunities available to them and achieve their full potential. In 2010, Ofsted were also disappointed by our attendance figures and told us that children “should only miss school if they absolutely have to!”

Because of this we are writing to remind you of our policy for absence and in particular, for term time family holidays. Although we understand how important it is for families to spend time together and the benefits of family holidays to children, we strongly request that you plan your holidays outside school term time. Our policy follows the guidance to schools given by Stockport Council and the Government. There is no automatic right to take holidays in term time and it is only in exceptional circumstances that a request for holidays will be agreed.

The guidance gives two examples of special circumstances:

- (1) “service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupils education”
- (2) “When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis” eg. in the aftermath of the death of a close family member.

The guidance is clear that holidays should not be granted because of the availability of cheaper holidays, if a parent has booked a holiday before checking about school holiday dates, for extended holidays to visit family abroad or because of an overlap with the start of term. These are the most common reasons given for holiday requests at Mersey Vale.

A request form that is available from the school office must be completed before planning any absence or booking any family holidays. When a request is made, the following information/evidence will help us decide if the holiday can be authorised:

- The reason for the absence and why it cannot be taken in the school holidays
- The number of days requested and previous requests for absence in term time
- The child’s attendance and punctuality record
- The time of year, the child’s stage of education, any special educational needs they may have, their progress and the impact of an absence on their learning

Examples of evidence required are shown below. This list is not exhaustive but provided to illustrate the types of document required.

- A letter from your employer.
- A medical appointment confirmation.
- A copy of your flight schedule including the date that the tickets were booked.
- A copy of a medical confirmation regarding the grave illness or death of your relative.

Parents should remember that there are 13 weeks holiday from school each year, including a 5 or 6 week long summer holiday. It should therefore not be necessary to take additional holidays from school during term time.

It is important for you to know that you can receive a penalty notice of £60 rising to £120 and that your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your child misses school and their absence has not been authorised.

Like you, we want the very best start in life for your child and appreciate your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. J. Mullane

Headteacher

APPLICATION FOR ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Regular school attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. We expect all parents/ carers to ensure that their children attend school whenever possible. All absences in term time can impact on a child's progress. If you wish to apply for your child to be absent from school, please complete this form and return it to school as soon as possible. Requests for absence will be considered in line with our policy and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

If your child is absent from school because they are on holiday and this absence has not been authorised or they do not return to school on the agreed due date, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice of £60 per parent, rising to £120. Your child may also be at risk of losing their school place.

PARENT/ CARER SECTION

Name of child _____ Year Group _____

Name of parent/carer _____ Contact number _____

Reason for request :

Why can't the absence be taken during school holidays? _____

Please provide evidence of any need for absence as stated in the letter on the reverse of this form.

Length of absence (number of school days) _____

Date absence to begin _____ Date due back in school _____

Parent/carers signature _____ Emergency telephone contact _____

SCHOOL SECTION

Date form received _____ Absence approved Yes No

Number of days approved ____

Number and date(s) of previous applications granted _____

Attendance previous year _____ % Attendance current year to date _____ %

Authorised Yes (subject to receipt of any required evidence) No

Comments / further evidence required :

Required evidence provided Yes No

Headteacher's signature _____ Date _____