

This Policy and the related procedures are very much a reflection of our Mission Statement. At St Scholastica's Primary School our mission statement says:

“we wish to educate the whole child through the integration of intellectual, spiritual, moral, emotional, psychological, social and physical development.”

This is done in “partnership with the wider community, especially the home and parish, where the development of the whole child is nurtured”

(Please note: This policy should be read and reviewed in conjunction with the school's Attendance, Safeguarding, Child Protection and Positive Behaviour policies and guidelines).

Introduction:

This is a successful school and you and your child play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy along with our Attendance Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on 1 September 2013, changing the rules about term-time holidays.

The regulations specify that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. If a head teacher grants leave, he or she should determine the number of days the child can be away from school.

Schools should consider each request individually taking into account specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013, regulation 2, legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/756/regulation/2/made)
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Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

The Governors in consultation have agreed the following examples of such exceptional circumstances as a guide for the Head teacher when considering leave of absence requests. Before deciding whether to authorise leave of absence the Head teacher will consider:-

- the impact for the student's academic progress of any absence
- the pupil's attendance over the academic year
- the pupil's attendance over passed academic years
- whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams
- any previous pattern of leave in term time

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. Parents/carers may be asked to produce evidence such as proof of purchase of tickets and/or flight details from the airline/travel agent, medical evidence, Mass Booklet, death certificate etc. Each case will be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – the Head teacher should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled. Flight evidence will be required.
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence - up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Time - off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education Social Work Service
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs”. Only one day will be authorised at a time.
- Out-of-school programmes such as music, arts or sports at a “high standard of achievement”

- Weddings of parents and siblings – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Head teacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Head teacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, or if it may cause a child further difficulties if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Up to a maximum of two days.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, except where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence and/or flight details from the travel company may be requested.
- Pilgrimages – as these can be taken during holiday time.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.

In addition leave in term time will not be agreed by us:

- beginning and end of terms – evidence will need to be provided to the school to confirm reason for absence e.g. medical evidence or flight details from the travel company.
- when a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- immediately before and during assessment times such as SATS.
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (95%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.

If the school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised.

Parents should bear in mind that a pupil who is absent for 9 days in a single academic year can only achieve a maximum of 95% attendance. This already puts them below the Government and school 'Good' rating for attendance which is 95.4%.

If evidence requested by the head teacher is not forthcoming within a reasonable time the absence is unauthorised. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is currently £60.00 per parent per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent per child if paid between 22 and 28 days. Parents who fail to pay Fixed Penalty Notices may be prosecuted in court.

Agreed By Governors: October 2015

Presented to staff: October 2015

Signed by Chair of Governors _____ Date _____

Signed by Head teacher _____ Date _____

Review date: October 2016