

LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

VISION

For children to be excited about their learning, proud of all their achievements, determined to be the best they can be, aware of the world around them, inspired by gospel values.

MISSION

- Through excellent teaching we will deliver an inspirational curriculum
- We will enable every child to make the very best progress
- We will work in partnership with children and families to further promote confidence and self esteem
- We will prepare children to confidently face the challenges of growing up in the 21st Century
- We will provide children with an understanding of local, national and global communities and faiths.
- With St Mary's Church, Brookside Methodist, and other local churches, we will further develop understanding of gospel values in action through worship and across the curriculum

TIME OFF SCHOOL FOR FAMILY HOLIDAYS IS NOT A RIGHT

The London Borough of Barnet's Education Welfare Team and the Governors of St Mary's Church of England School East Barnet strongly discourage absence from school unless absolutely essential. This is in keeping with the Education [Pupil Registration] Regulations 2006 and with the Local Authority's aim to maximise the potential of all pupils.

1. RATIONALE

All children need to attend school every day to maximise their educational opportunities. The curriculum is very detailed, and missing even a few days can lead to confusion and gaps in a child's learning. Whilst the temptation to take cheap flights and package holidays is understandable, it is not appropriate that this is at the expense of a child's learning. Other than in the most exceptional circumstances, authorised leave will not be granted.

2. Absence in school time will NOT be granted, for example, in the following circumstances:

- when economic factors are cited, e.g. cheap flights or packages
- when availability of the desired accommodation is given as the reason for the request
- when the holiday has been booked by a relative
- when parents/carers give the reason that they cannot obtain leave from their jobs in school holidays
- Friday or Monday to extend a long weekend

- the day before or day after a holiday for late flights or jet lag
- occasional days for birthdays or family celebrations.

In addition:

- in the 4 weeks prior to, or during National Examinations - No arranged period of absence will be authorised for any child who would be taking national examinations such as Y2 and Y6, or annual school tests in years 3-5.
- where children have had poor attendance patterns.

3. Leave MAY be granted only in exceptional circumstances as follows:

- for service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis, such as serious illness or bereavement of a close family member
- weddings of close family members where the distance does not allow for all travel to take place over a weekend.

Where **Exceptional Leave of Absence** is granted it is for a maximum of 10 school days. The 10 day period is not an entitlement, and the period of leave will only be granted following discussion with the Headteacher. Once the period of leave has been decided, further days will not be granted. In this eventuality, the additional absence will be unauthorised.

4. Extended Exceptional Leave of Absence

In rare circumstances, Extended **Exceptional Leave of Absence may** be granted for up to 20 school days. All such applications will be referred to the Governing Body for a decision.

Where Extended Exceptional Leave is granted parents will be expected to register their child in a local school whether in the UK or abroad. The Head teacher will also discuss with parents whether their plans could be changed to overlap with school holidays and thereby reduce the effect on their child's education.

Depending on the nature of the application, the Head Teacher may:

- refuse the whole period requested by a pupil's parents
- grant part of the period and refuse the remainder
- grant the whole of the period requested.

A letter refusing a request will explain the reasons for the refusal and what action will be taken if the parents ignore the refusal and keep their child away.

5. Applying for leave of absence

Every request for leave of absence, other than for minor appointments, is for the Head Teacher to consider. Application should be made:

- a minimum of 4 weeks before the requested date [except for emergencies]
- by filling a school leave of absence form

6. Refusal of Leave

Application will be refused for reasons cited in 1 above

7. Where permission is granted, the Head teacher will state in writing,

- i. the expected date of return
- ii. that the parents are expected to contact the school if anything delays the pupil returning to school when expected
- iii. a reminder that any additional days will be unauthorised, and what, if any, action will be taken if the pupil fails to return when expected.

8. Failure to Return From Extended Leave

Where a pupil fails to return 10 days after the expected return date the Head Teacher may take steps to remove the pupil from the school roll.

- The Head Teacher will ensure that there was no good reason for the pupil's absence, such as disrupted travel arrangements or illness, before deleting the pupil's name from the school roll.
- The Head Teacher and the Education Welfare Team will make reasonable enquiries to locate the pupil before the deletion is made.
- The school will delete the pupil from the school registers and transfer the pupil's information to the National Lost Pupils Database.
- If the pupil has a good reason to be absent he/she will be marked as an authorised absence using the relevant code.
- If the pupil is located, the school will take steps to address the reasons for the pupil's failure to attend, accessing support from other agencies where appropriate.

9. Travellers

Travellers are recognised as a distinct ethnic minority. They move around as part of their trade or business and the children usually travel with them. *People who are on extended holidays, including those on "world tours", are not included in the definition of travellers.*

When travellers' children are unable to attend school because they are travelling the absence should be as marked authorised using [Attendance Code T](#).

Travellers will be encouraged to access education whilst travelling and, if they attend educational provision through registration at another school or specialist provision, they can be marked as "present at approved educational activity", B.

The Head Teacher may refer such cases to the Ethnic Minority Achievement Team and Education Welfare Team for advice.

10. Record-keeping

The school will keep records of authorisations and refusals on file for future reference in the event of complaint or, indeed, further applications. Reasons for the decision reached will be kept, in order to ensure consistency of approach.

11. Legal and financial sanctions can parents face if their children miss school

- prosecution in a magistrates' court
 - an Education Supervision Order issued by a family court
 - fixed-penalty notices to the amount of £120 each, reduced to £60 each if paid within 21 days.
- Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

2. Application of policy

The Head Teacher will apply this policy which has been determined by the Governors of the School in accordance with guidelines laid down by Barnet's Education Welfare Team and the Education [Pupil Registration] Regulations 2006 and in keeping with Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Any appeal against the Head's interpretation of the policy should be sent in writing to the Chair of Governors c/o St Mary's School.

Policy agreed by Governing Body: March 2014

Updated March 2014

Signed:

Chair of Governors,
Jeremy Alford

Headteacher,
Mel Adams

APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

As a parent / carer you should fill in this form if, in the case of an emergency, you wish to take your child out of school for an extended period during term time. Please note that family holidays during term time will not normally be authorised.

The Head teacher will want to discuss with you the arrangements which will need to be made.

You should be aware that if the school approves this absence, your child will be expected to return on the date specified on the form. Failure to do so will result in any extra time being classified as unauthorised absence. It is also possible in certain circumstances that your child could be removed from the school roll and thereby have to find an alternative school.

If you take your child on leave without authorisation the Local Authority has the power to issue Fixed-penalty Notices of £50, per parent for each child, rising to £100 if not paid within 28 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004).

The conditions under which leave of absence during term time may be granted are contained in The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

I request that ed special leave of absence.

From (Date) / / To (Date) / /

Reason

My child will access education during the visit Yes / No
(please circle)

If Yes please provide details

Signature of Parent/Carer / /

-----Tear/Cut Here-----

Permission is granted for from school

From (Date) / / To (Date) / /

Signature of Head / /