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*"Barnabas, the Encourager"*

6<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**St Barnabas CE Primary School**  
**Request for Pupil Leave of Absence (Holidays) – Guidance Notes**

From September 2013, the Department for Education changed the way in which any requests for leave of absence for holidays in term time will be dealt with. There have been changes to the threshold for persistent absence from September 2015.

It is intended that this guidance should further reduce the amount of time children lose to holidays in term time.

Leave of Absence (including holidays in term time)

The changes mean that heads are not be able to authorise any requests for leave of absence in term time unless in exceptional circumstances.

Advice on what may constitute **exceptional** circumstances to grant a request for Leave of Absence suggests examples such as:

- service personnel 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 major crisis.
- Any other circumstances the head teacher considers to be exceptional.

We expect that there will be very few requests for leave of absence in term time which will be exceptional and therefore most requests for leave of absence will be declined and therefore marked as unauthorised.

Parents do not have an automatic right for their children to have authorised absence to go on holiday. If unauthorised leave of absence is taken, school may consider asking the LA to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. A Fixed Penalty Notice can require a parent to pay a sum of either £60 or £120. Each parent can be issued with a notice for each child so two parents with two children can potentially be issued with four notices.

**At St Barnabas, we will not authorise holidays or leave of absence in term time, except in exceptional circumstances, in line with the guidance from the Department for Education.**

**If you wish to apply for leave of absence for your child, please complete the 'Leave of Absence' form available from the school office. You should allow 3 weeks for this request to be processed.**

## **Persistent absence**

From September 2015, the DfE has reduced the persistent absence threshold from 15% to 10%. This means that if your child misses 10% of school sessions (has an attendance rate of below 90%), their attendance is deemed to be a cause for concern. Schools will be asked about the measures that they are taking to reduce persistent absence.

As there are 190 school days, your child only needs to miss 19 days to be below the persistent absence threshold.

Any child who has time off as a result of the usual childhood illnesses is unlikely to fall below the persistent absence threshold across the year overall. However, if a holiday is taken along with illness, children can quite easily have an attendance rate of below 90%.

We want the children to do as well as they possibly can at school and expect all children to be in school, unless they are unwell, to allow them to receive the education that is provided for them.

Please support your child to do as well as they possibly can by avoiding taking leave of absence in term time.

Please get in touch if you would like further information about our attendance policy.

Yours sincerely

Miss K Boardman  
Headteacher