



St Barnabas C of E Primary School  
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Headteacher: Miss K Boardman (BSc Hons)

*"Barnabas, the Encourager"*

28<sup>th</sup> January 2020

### Leave of Absence in Term Time

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to remind you of advice from the Department for Education which impacts on the way in which any requests for leave of absence including for holidays in term time will be dealt with.

Parents do not have an automatic right for their children to have authorised absence to go on holiday.

Head teachers have clear guidance to say that **they should not authorise any requests for leave of absence in term time unless in exceptional circumstances**. It is for each headteacher to make a decision as to what circumstances they consider to be exceptional.

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
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.
- any other circumstances the head teacher considers to be exceptional.

It is expected that head teachers will not authorise requests for leave of absence where the following apply:

- availability of cheap holidays or desired accommodation
- poor weather experienced in school holiday
- periods overlap with beginning or end of term.

There should be very few requests for leave of absence in term time that will be regarded as exceptional and therefore most requests will be declined and therefore marked as unauthorised.

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 2 weeks for this request to be processed. If you have information that you would rather not write on the form (e.g. sensitive family information) please make an appointment to discuss this with me. Each leave of absence request is considered separately.

You will receive a response from me informing you whether the leave of absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents can be issued with a Penalty Notice if their child is absent from school for a holiday in term time which is not authorised by the head teacher. A 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.

When considering whether to ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice I may consider the following:

- the length of the unauthorised absence in question
- the child's overall attendance for the current and for previous years
- whether previous unauthorised absence has been taken.

This information is not new. Parents are given this information when their child starts school and in newsletters annually (the most recent information was in the September 2019 newsletter). Our attendance policy and CYC attendance guidance can be found on our website ([About Us – Policies](#)).

Whilst many children at St Barnabas have good attendance, our overall attendance has been below average for several years and continues to be below average.

Attendance (including lates) is one of the areas that we are judged on by Ofsted and improving attendance was one of recommendations from our last Ofsted inspection.

You can help your child to make the most of the learning opportunities provided at school by:

- ensuring that they are ready on the playground by 8:45am
- not taking children out of school in term time unless absolutely necessary
- making routine dental and eye appointments out of school time.

We appreciate your support with this.

Yours sincerely



Miss K Boardman  
Headteacher

