

Earlsdon Primary School Policy on Term Time Holidays

(adopted from City Council Policy)

Introduction, Law and Regulations

Regulation 12 of the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations 1981, states that schools have the discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of an annual family holiday during term time. This permission is only granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school and only in the most exceptional circumstances should this be granted for more than 10 school days in any one year. Parents and guardians do not have the automatic right to take authorised holiday.

Permission must be given in advance of the holiday after agreed procedures have been followed.

The law states that the holiday must be the annual family holiday and should only be requested by the parent with whom the child normally resides. Only in exceptional circumstances may the amount granted exceed more than two weeks in any school year.

Good consistent school attendance is regarded as essential in securing the desired outcomes for children as itemised in 'Every Child Matters' and is crucial in ensuring that pupils have the best chance of success.

The Government's own guidance on the issue of term-time holidays states:

'Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday during term-time'.

If a parent takes a pupil on holiday in term-time without the Head Teacher's permission, or if a child fails to return from holiday by the agreed date, this should be recorded as unauthorised on the pupil's school attendance record. If a pupil has not returned to school within 10 school days of the expected agreed date of return, the Head Teacher may take the pupil off roll, providing the correct procedure has been followed - (*see section 'Removing Pupils From Roll'*)

Schools

In setting school procedures and a school policy on term-time holidays we will consider the following: -

- The child's overall attendance pattern
- Holidays already taken in the same school year
- The child's stage of education
- The ability of the child to catch up on the work they have missed
- Time and duration of the holiday
- Proximity to SATs in year 6
- The reasons for taking holiday in term-time
- Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave by their employer.
- Whether the holiday is in the child's best interest

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Earlsdon School will use a holiday request form that reflects the considerations above and ensure that parents/carers understand the consequences of taking holidays in term-time without permission. (This could include the issue of Penalty Notices or removal from roll in the case of unauthorised extended holidays)

Procedures to be followed when requests for term-time holidays are made

- 1 A formal request form is provided to parents for completion a minimum of two weeks prior to their holiday and an accompanying information leaflet detailing concerns over Term-Time Holidays. (Also available on website)
- 2 The form to be returned to the Headteacher (via the school office): section 8(1) The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 states 'Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school'.
- 3 Authorisation to be refused or approved by the Headteacher. If authorisation is not to be given a meeting with parents will take place.
- 4 The request will be discussed with parents/carers within 5 working days of the request being made. Parents/carers will be made aware of the possible consequences of unauthorised holiday.
- 5 Following a decision about authorisation, those responsible for the pupil's registration to be informed of the correct code to use: H, F or G
- 6 If the absence is to be unauthorised, consideration should be given to a Penalty Notice application and/or a referral to Education Welfare Service or removal from roll if the conditions for this are met.
- 7 Holiday Request form to be retained on the child's school file.

Extended Holidays Overseas

In the case of families recently arrived in Britain, special care will be taken to ensure that the policy has been clearly explained and understood, taking into account that the parents'/carers' first language may not be English and they may be unfamiliar with the education system in this country. Parents will be encouraged to time their holiday to overlap official school holidays.

Parents will be made aware that if a holiday is more than 10 days to visit family overseas, the authorisation of this is at the head teacher's discretion and will take into account the educational needs and stage of the child. This extended holiday must be discussed with the Head teacher. The Head Teacher will stress the educational impact an extended holiday will have on the pupil. It will be made clear to parents that if the holiday is not authorised this could result in, a Penalty Notice being issued or the pupil being removed from roll if they have not returned to school within 10 school days of the agreed date.

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Information for parents

- Holidays can seriously disrupt a child's continuity of learning
- Holidays can result in gaps in a pupil's learning
- Holidays can cause disruption to friendship groups
- Holidays should always be avoided at the beginning of a new school term
- Holidays should always be avoided close to examinations or tests
- Holidays should always be avoided during the first year at a new school
- Holidays should always be avoided during the Reception Year
- It is recommended that parents request holiday prior to confirming their holiday booking.
- Pupils who attend school regularly perform better in their SATs and achieve higher grades at GCSE
- Pupils who take 10 days' holiday during term-time can achieve only a maximum attendance of 94.7%, even if there are no other absences through the year. The government recommendation for all school pupils to achieve their potential is 95%+.
- Research suggests that children who are taken out of school during term-time may never catch up on work missed.
- Taking a school child on holiday in term-time may give them the unspoken message that it is acceptable to be absent from school during term-time.

Holidays In Term Time - Removing Pupils From Roll (see flowchart attached)

If a pupil does not return to school after an authorised or unauthorised 10 school day or more holiday, government guidance states that the school must check that the pupil has a "good reason" for their continued absence. Examples of good reasons are given as disrupted travel arrangements or illness. The Head Teacher will decide whether the illness of someone other than the pupil is relevant. If parents do not voluntarily contact the school to supply a "good reason" for a pupil's continued absence the school will attempt to make contact with the parents using the contact details supplied on the holiday consent form or in the school's general records. It is recommended that within three days of the pupil's expected date of return, the school should attempt to communicate with the parents either in writing or through a telephone conversation, which is noted. The following issues should be dealt with in the school's communication with the parents:

- The date the school expected the pupil to return.
- The parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure that the pupil attends school regularly.
- The reason why the pupil did not return on the expected date.
- The possibility of legal sanctions against the parents.
- The possibility of the school deleting the pupil from the school roll following a further 7 school days of absence.
- The fact that the pupil must be marked as unauthorised absence if there is no "good reason" for the pupil's continued absence.

If parents/carers either voluntarily or following communication from the school supply the school with a "good reason" for the pupil's continued absence the pupil can be marked authorised absence whilst this reason continues.

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If parents/carers respond to communication from the school but do not supply a "good reason" for the pupil's continuing absence but the school is aware of the whereabouts of the pupil he/she can be taken off roll 10 school days or more after the date the pupil was expected to return to school.

If after reasonable enquiries by the school the pupil cannot be located or the school has welfare concerns over the pupil the Local Authority (Education Welfare Officer) will be contacted and the Education Welfare Service will carry out Local Authority checks and advise on future steps.

Children Under School Age

For reception classes parents can request that their child's entry to school is deferred until the child is of compulsory school age (ie. later in the school year, at the start of the term after the child's 5th birthday as long as this is not the start of the next academic year). This has the effect that the place is held for that child and is not available to be offered to another child.

Holidays In Term Time – Removing Pupils From Roll
(10 days or more authorised or unauthorised absence)

