



Great Coates Primary School

Holiday Absence Policy

Rationale

Absence from school can seriously disrupt a child's learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away but they also have to simultaneously catch up and keep up on their return. This leads to a risk of underachievement which together we should be trying to avoid. Research shows that pupil attendance of less than 95% can impact negatively on pupil attainment and progress.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's full attendance per academic year. There exists no "entitlement" to term time holiday leave of absence; this is awarded solely at the discretion of the Principal. There will be occasions when absence from school on a planned basis is required but in these instances, the permission of the Principal must be sought in advance of the absence. Should requests for absence be denied, then in all circumstances, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. The Principal reserves the right to decide whether or not to authorise an absence in all circumstances, including sickness.

Holiday Absence Objective:

- To clarify the school's policy on term time holiday absence
- To make authorisations for term time holidays very much the exception to the rule

Rationale for policy:

- To reduce the number and frequency of term time holidays
- To reduce the potential negative impact of term time holidays on children's education.
- To ensure the policy is transparent to parents

Policy implementation:

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of Principals to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Principals will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reasons if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

Great Coates Primary School will **not** authorise absences for holidays unless exceptional circumstances exist. In exceptional circumstances the Principal **may** authorise up to a maximum of 10 days. This is at the discretion of the Principal. Absences of longer than 10 days will not be authorised.

Definition of exceptional circumstance:

- Parent/Carer's holiday pattern determined by employer (evidence from employer may be required)
- Parent/Carer is in Armed Forces.

To request any planned absence, parents should use the school's holiday request form which can be obtained from the school office.

School will not authorise term time holidays in the following circumstances:

- Where there have been previous term time holiday absences of any length in the same Key Stage (for this purpose Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 count as the same Key Stage.)
- Where there is a history of poor attendance over the previous 12 months (absence below 95%)
- Where the request is for more than 5 days
- Where there is a retrospective request for term time holiday
- Where pupils are in Year 2 or Year 6 (national curriculum testing years)
- Where there is failure to evidence that any request is due to an exceptional circumstance.

Procedure for children taking unauthorised holiday absences

Great Coates Primary School will make every attempt to inform parents prior to absence when the request will be unauthorised.

If a child is taken on an unauthorised holiday, which is for more than 5 days, the case will be referred to the School Attendance Panel and a penalty notice may be served on the parents.

If a child has gone on holiday that has been authorised but not returned on the expected date, the school will attempt to establish contact with the family immediately. If the child does not return to school immediately a home visit will be made.

If the school cannot make contact with the contacts on the school Scholarpack system the police will be called.