

## AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME

**IMPORTANT:** Please read carefully the information below.

**WARNING:** If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice\* per parent per child or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>Pupils registered at a school are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p><b>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</b></p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b>, and you may receive a £80* fine per parent for each child.</p>	<p>The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However, before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>

<p><b>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Genuine illness</li> <li>▪ Emergency medical / dental appointments</li> <li>▪ Days of religious observance</li> <li>▪ Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li> <li>▪ External examinations</li> <li>▪ When Traveller children travel with their parents for the purposes of work where this is agreed by the school</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other examples of absence from school that will not be authorised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Any type of shopping</li> <li>▪ Looking after siblings or unwell parents</li> <li>▪ Minding the house</li> <li>▪ Birthdays</li> <li>▪ Resting after a late night</li> <li>▪ Relatives visiting or visiting relatives</li> <li>▪ <b><u>The Department for Education states: "Head teachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a head teacher grants a leave request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm."</u></b></li> </ul>
<p><b>The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full-time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.</b></p> <p>We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.</p>	

\*For the first offence a Penalty Notice will be charged at £80 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid between days 22 and 28. If a second Penalty Notice is issued within a 3-year period, it will be charged at £160 without the option to pay less and must be paid within 28 days.