

Dear HPPS families,

Thank you for engaging with our attendance relaunch this week and for reading the information we are sharing. Securing good attendance is a partnership between school and home and we really value your support.

This email contains information and guidance about leave requests and penalty notices.

Term time leave

Current legislation does not allow any holiday during term time unless there are extenuating circumstances when it will be at the discretion of the Head or Assistant Head Teacher. Therefore, Headley Park Primary school does not authorise holiday absences apart from in exceptional circumstances such as:

- a. Bereavement
- b. Compassionate Leave
- c. Weddings of immediate family members (as long as not abroad)
- d. Educational experiences discussed with the Headteacher in advance of the absence being requested

Therefore any holiday absences will be classified as unauthorised and parents will be informed accordingly.

For a full list of exceptional circumstances, please see the school website.

Requesting term time leave

To request any term time leave, parents must return a '[Pupil Term Time Leave Request](#)' form. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. Wherever possible, this should be **at least four weeks** before the absence. Leave of absences cannot be approved retrospectively. You have to get permission from the Assistant Headteacher/Headteacher if you want to take your child out of school during term time.

The school will review each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances. Parents may be required to provide the school with additional evidence in order to support the request. The expectation of the school is that **term time holidays should not be planned or booked** as a matter of course, as **they are highly likely to be unauthorised**.

Unauthorised absences

Absence will be marked as unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday).
- The pupil is on a family holiday.
- If pupil attendance is already below 90% (this will be discussed with parents in a meeting).

Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

In April 2017, the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'. Therefore, if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents/carers who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent/carer but may have day to day care of the child.

Penalty notices

Penalty notices may be issued to parents who do not comply with the school's policy. The penalty is £60 (per parent, per child) payable within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Failure to pay will result in prosecution.

Penalty Notices may be issued when:

- A parent has taken their child on holiday during term without school authorisation especially when the pupil will miss exams i.e. SATs in Year 2 and Year 6.
- A pupil is not in school and after investigation their absence at that time was unauthorised.
- Pupils are regularly late after the register has closed each day.
- A pupil has 8 or more unauthorised absences within the previous 10 week period

[Please see our school website here](#) for frequently asked questions about penalty notices.

If you have any queries regarding this letter, please reference the Attendance Policy that can be found on our school website.

With thanks for your continued support,

The Headley Park Attendance Team