



**BEVERLEY SCHOOL  
FOR  
PUPILS WITH AUTISM**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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# **BEVERLEY SCHOOL'S ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

We place high importance on full school attendance, but recognise that there may be times when it is necessary for pupils to require leave of absence. This policy seeks to give guidance to parents / carers for such requests.

The Department for Education (DfE) state that:

“All children of statutory school-age who are registered at a school must by law, attend that school regularly. Any Absence from school can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and have a detrimental effect on their future progress. Regularly taking time off school for family holidays or events can have a significant impact on a child's achievement”.

## **REPORTING ABSENCES**

Please remember it is your responsibility to call us if your child is not in school. Should a child be marked as absent by the class teacher, and no reason for the absence is apparent, a member of the office team will contact you.

If absence is persistent, the Education Welfare Officer will become involved and you may be asked to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting. The panel consists of parents / carers, Headteacher, the Educational Welfare Officer and a school governor. It is the Panel's role to explore with parents / carers any issues that may be contributing to poor attendance and help you resolve those issues.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

The granting of leave of absence in school term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the school. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The DfE make clear that:

“Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted”.

Parents wishing the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully and then complete the form entitled “Request for leave of Absence in Term Time only” and return to the Headteacher (copies are available on our website or can be obtained from the school office).

The form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered well before the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any holiday booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision on their request. In any event, the request form must be received by the school at least four weeks before the departure date to allow sufficient time for appropriate consideration.

Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. In considering a request, the school will take account of:

- the exceptional circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
- the age of the child
- the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
- the overall attendance pattern of the child
- the nature of the trip
- students / pupils on examination courses will not normally be granted leave of absence

Where parents have children in more than one school, a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. It is possible that because of these factors different decisions may be made. It is hoped that if this situation arises, parents will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any other requests.

Where requests for a grant of leave of absence are received from only one parent, the response letter – agreeing or refusing – will be either addressed to both / all parents where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all parents / carers are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent may receive a penalty notice.

Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and, no information is available to the school to explain / justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, his/her place at the school could be lost.

Should the School decide not to grant leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised which may be subject to a Holiday Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child. From 1st September 2013 this fine increased to £120 if not paid within 21 days.

### **Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time**

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – Headteachers should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence – up to a maximum of 3 days
- Serious illness of a close relative – only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his / her parent belongs”.

- This would include the Islamic Eids, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions. Headteachers may specify that only one day will be authorised at a time (most of the families who request leave on religious grounds are Muslim and the request is for the two Eids).
- Weddings of parents and siblings – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however, we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations, the Headteacher may use his / her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulties if he / she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

### **Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional**

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Pilgrimages by parents (eg. Hajj). These are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional as children themselves do not perform Hajj, but tend to travel with their parents when they go.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost / parental work commitments.