

## Information for Parents/Carers

Children of school-age who are on roll at a school must, by law attend that school regularly and punctually.

Regular attendance is important, not just because the law requires it but also because it is the best way of ensuring children make the most of the educational opportunities available to them.

When a child is absent from school, he or she misses not only the teaching provided on the days when absent, but is also less prepared for the lessons on their return. This will lead to a risk of underachievement, which Headteachers and parents will both wish to avoid.

There may be occasions when a child has to miss school – for example, if unwell. Any other absences should be kept to an absolute minimum. In particular, parents should avoid taking children out of school during term-time in order to go on holiday.

## What the Law Says

The regulations make it clear that parents **do not** have any automatic right or entitlement to take a child out of school. Indeed, it is likely that in most cases Headteachers will refuse to authorise the absence.

The regulations state that Headteachers cannot grant a leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Headteacher considers there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application.

## How we deal with requests for absences during term time

Our attendance policy strongly discourages parents from requesting absences during term-time and states that leave for term-time absences will not be granted unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

However it is the decision of the Headteacher as to what might constitute **exceptional circumstances** and each request for term-time absence will be considered on an individual basis.

It is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons for an absence to be authorised.

## Examples of Exceptional Circumstances are:

- Where company policy dictates it is taken at a specified time (evidence required)
- Service personnel tour of duty start/finish
- Recovery from medical or emotional issue (evidence required)
- Funeral of close relative or family friend
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence (maximum of 3 days)
- Out of school programmes e.g. music, arts and sports
- Child Entertainment Performances (licence required)
- Religious observance – day set apart for religious observance by religious body to which they belong
- Weddings of parents, sibling or close family member

Please obtain a Request for Exceptional Leave Form from the school office **in advance** of the proposed absence.

## Holidays are fine – just not in term time!

There are 365 days in a calendar year. Your child is expected to attend just 190 days AT SCHOOL.

This means there are 175 days for holidays, birthday treats, special events with families, and non-urgent appointments.

If you choose to take your child out of school for 10 days during term time, your child can achieve no more than 94.7% school attendance for the academic year. This figure is lower than we expect for all pupils in Threemilestone School – we aim for higher!

NB- Throughout this leaflet reference to parent(s) should be understood to include carer(s).

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Threemilestone School

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## Issues parents need to be aware of

If the absence request is not authorised by the school and the absence is still taken, this will remain unauthorised.

Should leave be granted but the child remain absent for longer than agreed, then this extra time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Should a child fail to return to school on the agreed date consideration may be taken to remove them from the school roll. Parents would then be responsible for reapplying for a school place with no guarantee of a place back at the same school.

Any leave of absence that has not been authorised may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. **This may result in the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution proceedings.**

A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent of each child of statutory school age and carries a maximum penalty of £120. (e.g. Two parents with two children could incur a total cost of £480.) If the matter proceeds to court this carries a maximum penalty of £1,000 per parent per child and a criminal conviction, which may affect your current and/or future employment.



## Parent Information Leaflet

## Requests for Leave of Absence during Term Time