

Exceptional Leave of Absence Policy

(Sept20-Sept22)

➤ **Exceptional Leave of Absence Requests During Term Time**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

1. It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
2. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school and employment.
3. Graduates earn, on average, double that of young people that leave school with no qualifications.
4. All Hillingdon schools are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave.
5. The Head Teacher / Deputy Head may meet personally with family members applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
6. Exceptional Leave will always be refused in Years 2, 6
7. Exceptional Leave will always be refused when a student's attendance is less than 95%.
8. Exceptional Leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
9. Exceptional Leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
10. Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the student's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

The Participation Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. The amount of Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days and then rises to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the notice remains unpaid you will each be summoned to the Magistrate Court and could be fined up to £2500. If unauthorised leave is repeated the Participation Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

➤ **Guidance to Exceptional Leave of Absence Requests:**

Our school will take into account the following when considering a request for exceptional leave:

- the amount of time requested

- age of the pupil and the year group they are in
- the pupil's attendance/punctuality record
- proximity of SATs and public examinations
- length of the proposed leave
- pupil's ability to catch up the work
- pupil's educational needs
- general welfare of the pupil
- exceptional circumstances of the request / purpose of leave
- when the request was made

In brief this means that:

- Parents/carers **cannot** demand exceptional leave of absence as an automatic right.
- Requests **must** be in writing.
- All requests **will** be considered on their own merits.
- Absence will be granted **only in exceptional** circumstances
- The power to authorise/unauthorise exceptional leave belongs to the Head Teacher.

➤ **Procedure**

Parent/carer will need to complete an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' request form (*Appendix A*) and submit this to the school office with a minimum of 3 weeks prior to the intended period of absence; school will respond to the request within one week (email and/or meeting). If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriately support will be offered to the parent/carer.

An email confirming that the request has been authorised/declined (*Appendix B/C*) will be sent to the parent/carer, within one week of receipt of the Exceptional Leave of Absence request and/or meeting with the Head Teacher/Deputy Head.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 state that where a pupil has been granted exceptional leave of absence and subsequently fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence, and the failure is not due to sickness or any other unavoidable cause, his/her name may, following consultation with the Local Authority, be deleted from the admission register. The implications of this and the difficulties of admission to oversubscribed schools will be made clear to the parent/carer.

➤ **If absence is agreed the school will:**

- confirm agreement in writing (email - *Appendix B*).
- complete the contract (*Appendix D*).
- explain what work the child will miss in school. A study pack will be arranged for the pupil to complete whilst away from school. It is the parents/carers responsibility to

ensure that the study pack has been completed.

- inform parent/carer of the possibility of the pupil's removal from the school roll if the pupil does not return within ten days of the agreed date and no authorisable explanation is forthcoming.

➤ **If absence is not agreed the school will:**

- confirm decision in writing if an application had been made (email - *Appendix Q*).
- use model emails *Appendices G and H* where appropriate, following an unauthorised absence

➤ **Registration Marks**

C	Exceptional Leave of Absence is authorised (authorised absence)
G	Exceptional Leave of Absence is not authorised (unauthorised absence). This mark will also be used for days taken in excess of an agreed period

Notes to Appendices

A: Exceptional Leave of Absence Request Form

- All requests for exceptional leave should be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to the commencement of the period requested.
- Based on the nature of the application some parents/carers may be invited in to school to discuss the request in person. An outcome letter will then be issued.

B: Model Email – Exceptional Leave of Absence Authorised

- Parents/carers will receive a written response to their request within one week of the application and meeting with the Head Teacher / Deputy Head.

C: Model Email – Exceptional Leave of Absence Not Authorised

- Parents/carers will receive a written response to their request within one week of the application / or meeting with the Head Teacher / Deputy Head.

D: Model Home-School contract for authorised Exceptional leave

E: Procedures Flowchart for Exceptional leave authorised

F: Procedures Flowchart for Exceptional leave unauthorised

G: Model letter 1

H: Model letters 2

I: Model letter 3

Appendix A

Hermitage Primary School Application for Exceptional Leave of Absence

Please note that there is no automatic right for pupils to be granted authorised absence for exceptional leave. Hermitage Primary school considers every request for exceptional leave in relation to the individual pupil's attendance and educational attainment.

**Regular attendance is an important factor in your child's performance at school.
Please think carefully before deciding to request exceptional leave.**

Name of
Pupil:

Date of Birth:
Class/Year
Group:

Address:

Leave requested

from:
(date)

to:
(date)

Reason for Exceptional Leave request

Name of Parent/Carer:

Signature:

Date:

This is an example of the number of lessons your child will miss. Remember these will not be repeated.

- 1 days absence = 6 lessons missed
- 3 days absence = 18 lessons missed
- 1 weeks absence = 30 lessons missed
- 2 weeks absence = 60 lessons missed

Exceptional leave absences which have not been agreed by our school will be marked as unauthorised absences; these will be referred to the Local Authority's Participation Officer (PO) for consideration of a Penalty Notice or other action.

For School Use:

Attendance %

Any previous Exceptional Leave (any Academic Year) Yes/No* No. of days

Meeting arranged with parent/carers Yes/No Date.....

Request authorised Yes/No Date.....

Did you know..?

Children spend on average around 195 days out of 365 in school.

Children who lose time from school do not do as well as they could.

There is never a good time to take children away from their lessons especially:

- When children have important tests and coursework to complete for example Years 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, or 11.
- When they move from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 (Infant to Junior School).
- When they move from Primary to Senior School (Year 6 to Year 7) (Key Stages 3 to 4).

It is not true

- That they catch up. Research shows that by missing lessons, pupils soon fall behind. Lessons they miss are **not** repeated at a later date.
- That for younger children, lost schooling does not matter. It is quite the opposite! During the earlier years' essential foundations for learning are secured.

Every School Day Counts - Always

Please, please put your child's education **First**

Parents/carers who take their children out of school during term time without the Head Teacher's authorisation beyond an agreed date:

- Risk losing their child's place at the school.
- Risk being taken to court or being given a fixed penalty fine if their child's attendance is below 95%.
- Risk their child's future.
- Risk their child feeling left behind or left out.

Stop and think what it will cost your child.

Every lesson counts!

Appendix D

Home - School contract for Exceptional Leave in Term Time: Authorised

Child's name

Class

This contract is an agreement between the parents/carers of the above named child and the school.

As Head Teacher, I have agreed that:

will be absent from school from to

He/she will return to school on or before

I/we understand that, in accordance with legislation, if he/she does not return within 20 days of the agreed date, his/her name may be removed from the school register. I understand that, if this happens, I/we will have to reapply and there may not be a place for him/her at our school.

Signed Parent/Carer (1)

Signed Parent/Carer (2)

Date

