

St. Vincent's Catholic Primary School

A Policy Statement on Holidays during term time

September 2016 to 31 August 2017

Mission Statement:

"It is the mission of this Catholic School to enable our children to become aware of the world that God has given them and to recognise their vocation and responsibilities within it."



Introduction

Absence during term-time as a result of term-time holidays interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in schools. Such holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

This policy is intended to make a clear statement regarding the issue of term-time holidays: to manage the issue consistently; to ensure that the minimum amount of teaching and learning time is lost and to ensure that parents develop a consistent understanding of the response which they may expect from our school.

Legal and National Context

Amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removes references to schools' discretionary power to grant leave – up to 10 days - for the purpose of an annual holiday during term time.

The amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are '**exceptional circumstances**'.

The amendments give parents no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time.

The DfE expects schools now to adopt a much more challenging response to requests for leave for such holidays and it is anticipated that few absences for leave during term time will be authorised by schools.

If leave of absence is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded as such in the School's Attendance Register and it will be reported to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer.

If such absence totals 10 sessions or more, schools are required to consider whether they should request that the Local Authority issues a Fixed Penalty Notice to Parents/Carers. (See school website for Cheshire East Guidance: 'Taking Children on Holiday during Term Time')

Requesting Leave of Absence

Holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and school must be satisfied that the circumstances behind the request for a holiday warrant such an absence. Should any child miss school for 10 sessions or more, as a result of unauthorised absence, the Head Teacher may request that the Local Authority issues a Fixed Penalty Notice.

A sub-committee of Governors, of which the Head Teacher is a member, will meet in the first week of every month to consider every holiday request. It will therefore be necessary for Parents to request holiday absence at least 4 weeks before the intended holiday. Parents must make clear, in writing, the exceptional circumstances behind the request for absence. Such exceptional circumstances might include the following:

- Siblings attend or parents work at a school in another Local Authority with a different holiday pattern
- Parents' occupational holiday entitlement is such that holidays may only be permitted at specific times – employer's evidence will be required
- A parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday
- There has recently been a death or significant other trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation
- The holiday is a unique, one-off, never-to-be-repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested

Only 1 request may be made in any academic year

Before leave is granted:

- A child's attendance record over the previous 20 week period will be checked before authorisation of leave is given
- Consideration will be given to the timing of such leave and whether it impacts on tests, SATs, exams or other significant events in the school calendar

Your next steps:

If you still intend to request a holiday you **must write a letter to the Head Teacher** requesting the holiday. This letter must contain the following information:

- Date of the request
- Name of child/ren
- Reason for absence and an explanation of why the Governors should consider the request as an exceptional circumstance taking note of the school's advice regarding what is considered to be an exceptional circumstance
- Date the holiday will commence
- Date your child/ren will return to school
- Your full name and signature

Due for review: Sept 2017