



Leave of Absence Holiday Policy

| | |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| Written by | Redcar and Cleveland LA |
| Date | September 2015 |
| Review date | September 2017 |

The following policy has been adopted by Grangetown Primary School.

11. **LOCAL AUTHORITY - LEAVE OF ABSENCE (HOLIDAY) POLICY adopted by Grangetown Primary School**

- 11.1 Holidays in term time can damage a child's education and future life prospects, particularly for those pupils with existing attendance problems, struggling with education or being absent at critical times in the school year. The Redcar and Cleveland People Services are committed to working in partnership with schools and families to manage and reduce school absence due to term time holidays.
- 11.2 Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. These regulations come into effect from the 1st September 2013.
- 11.3 The Government, the LA and the schools acknowledge the financial and work pressures some families are subject to and in exceptional circumstances are prepared to authorise term time leave of absence. Most parents acknowledge the need for these absences to be managed carefully to avoid having a detrimental effect on their child's education and do co-operate with the schools, however, a significant minority of parents take their children out of school without authority.
- 11.4 The government has introduced legislation allowing the LA to issue penalty notices to parents who fail to ensure their children attend school and this is incorporated within our school attendance procedures. All schools within the Borough are encouraged to adopt a common leave of absence policy to ensure legal compliance;
- Parents should provide at least 4 school weeks advance notice in writing of any planned absence, the head teacher has the discretion to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
 - The LA may consider taking further action when unauthorised leave of absence is taken at the following critical times and circumstances, **if deemed to be in the public interest.**
- a) At any time in September

- b) For any student whose attendance was 94.9% and below within the previous 12 calendar months, measured from the date before the first day of the leave of absence (including authorised and unauthorised absence).
 - c) At any time during formal external examination and assessment periods, including preparation time (school to provide evidence to support).
 - d) If a holiday warning letter has been issued in the previous 12 calendar months, measured from the date before the first day of the leave of absence.
 - e) Warning letters will be issued in those cases where attendance is 95% and above during the previous 12 months.
 - f) Warning letters will also be issued at the request of head teachers, for those pupils failing to achieve their academic attainment/potential, patterns of previous attendance concerns/punctuality, or any other concerns that impact on their learning.
- 11.5 The school should publish the formal holiday policy on an annual basis to all parents. Leave of absence taken without approval will be recorded as an unauthorised holiday absence (code G).
- 11.6 When the head teacher has decided not to authorise a leave of absence in accordance with the policy they may make a referral to the Attendance & Welfare Service. The head teacher should specify whether they wish a HOLPOL1 (warning letter) or HOLPOL2 (penalty notice) to be issued. After consultation with the Team Manager the service will issue at the request of the head teacher, either a HOLPOL1 (EW24) or HOLPOL2 (EW25) to both parent(s)/carer(s) concerned. A Penalty Notice, (EW15) will be issued with a HOLPOL2 where the circumstances would support a successful prosecution for failing to ensure the regular attendance of a child in the event of the notice not being paid. Where the pupil has already been referred to the Attendance & Welfare Service and the case is in procedures, the unauthorised leave of absence should be considered as part of that process as the issue of the penalty notice may not be appropriate. A HOLPOL1 warns the family that any future unauthorised leave of absence in term time may result in a penalty notice being issued. If the leave of absence has not been authorised but is outside the terms of the policy the service may decide to take no further action against the family and HOLPOL3 letter (EW26) will be sent to the Head Teacher.

It is important for the head teacher to decide on each case on its own merits and to be accountable for their decision should this be challenged by parents. Head Teachers may be required to give evidence in court if a prosecution ensues due to the non payment of the Penalty Notice.

Where a Penalty Notice is unpaid, The Team Manager of the Attendance & Welfare Service will make the final decision on whether it is in the public interest to proceed to prosecution.