



# SINGLETON PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Holiday Requests in Term Time

### Requesting Holidays During Term Time

#### Important Changes to Attendance Policy (Effective from 19th August 2024)

We aim to ensure that all parents and guardians are fully aware of the new attendance framework and how it affects holiday requests during term time.

#### Key Points of the New Attendance Framework

1. **Penalty Notices:** Penalty notices will be issued if your child's absence meets the threshold. Each case will be reviewed individually to ensure fairness.
2. **Prosecution for Unauthorised Leave:** Unauthorised leave of 15 days or more is considered excessive and may lead to prosecution, emphasizing the importance of regular attendance.
3. **Compliance with New Framework:** Our school follows the new framework and the advice of Lancashire County Council to meet statutory requirements.

#### Understanding the New Guidance

With the support of our Lancashire County Council (LCC) Attendance Officer, we have diligently worked through the new documentation to understand its implications.

#### Summary of Changes in Legislation (From August 2024)

- **New Requirements:** The Department for Education (DfE) has implemented new statutory guidance to improve school attendance.
- **Key Changes:**
  - Schools must monitor attendance more closely and act promptly on unexplained absences.
  - Greater emphasis on working with parents to support regular attendance.
  - Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly, except in allowable circumstances such as illness or pre-approved absences.
  - Stricter enforcement of attendance policies, including fines for unauthorised term-time holidays and prosecutions for excessive unauthorised absence.
  - Fines for unauthorised absences will be standardised nationally. A fine will be considered if a child misses 5 days of school without authorisation. The cost of fines will increase from £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days, and from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days. Fines are issued to both parents for each of their children.

#### Legislative Compliance

Our school is required to comply with the new DfE guidance, which includes the use of fines for unauthorised absences. The governing body will consider each case individually, applying fines where appropriate.



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Headteachers cannot authorise any leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied that there are "exceptional" circumstances to warrant the granting of leave. In our school, the S.H.E. Committee supports the monitoring of absences and will consider applications for holidays in term time.

Lancashire County Council attendance department has explained that the following examples are classed as exceptional circumstances:

- **Parents in the armed forces** who miss school holidays.
- **Police** whose annual leave is dictated by circumstances such as riots, critical incidents, or special events like the Olympics.
- **Parents whose holidays are inflexible.** In this circumstance, parents would need to provide the contact names of their employers to clarify this (e.g., where a factory closes down for a set date each year and holidays cannot be taken outside this time).

As a result, the Governing Body had no choice but to enforce both national and county requirements as laid out in the school's attendance policy:

- Holidays will not be authorised in term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance.
- The County recommended "request for leave" forms will be used and can be obtained online from the school's website.
- All applications for "exceptional circumstance" leave must be made allowing 6 weeks for a decision to be made.
- Parents applying for an exceptional circumstance will be expected to provide evidence to support the application.
- The decision will be made by a governor representative of the S.H.E. committee in consultation with the headteacher.
- Parents may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the application for exceptional leave.
- Parents will be informed by letter as to the outcome.

## Support from Lancashire Attendance Officer

Our LCC Attendance Officer visits each term to review our attendance data, discuss concerns, and advise on steps to improve attendance.

## Impact on Learning

Regular attendance is crucial for your child's learning and development. Extended absences can significantly impact their academic progress and social integration, as well as the progress of other pupils within the class. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring your child attends school regularly.

## Respect for Staff

Please remember that our staff members who contact you or send out letters regarding penalty notices are following protocol. They are not responsible for making the rules. We kindly ask that you treat them with respect and understanding.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we implement these changes. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.