



## The Hadleigh Pyramid

### TERM TIME ABSENCE POLICY – 2022-2023

#### PRINCIPLE

It is a legal requirement for children to attend school. The school places great importance on attendance. High attendance leads to high achievement. **From 1 September 2013 legislation prohibits any school from authorising leave of absence except in exceptional circumstances.** Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

It is therefore illegal to take children out of school during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. **There is no entitlement to any leave of absence during term time.** Schools are in session for 38 weeks per year, so there are opportunities to take children on holiday during the remaining 14 weeks.

The school, Suffolk Local Authority and OFSTED scrutinise attendance levels in school. It is a national and local priority to improve school attendance in order to maximise students' achievement.

Absence taken without prior permission will be recorded as unauthorised absences.

95% attendance at school is equal to taking a day off every month.

90% attendance at school is equal to taking off half a day every week.

80% attendance at school over five years is equal to being absent for a whole school year.

#### PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

This policy provides guidance on:

- a. what might be defined as exceptional circumstances;
- b. procedures for applying for leave of absence;
- c. The use of Fixed Penalty Fines for unauthorised absence.

#### CRITERIA FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE

It is not possible to define exceptional circumstances, but examples of what might be considered as such are:

1. Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be supported by documentary evidence from the organisation. Each case would be considered individually.
2. Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.

3. Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided, from qualified professionals, such as a doctor.

Where there are other factors that the headteacher considers to be exceptional circumstances, this may be referred to the Local Authority for advice.

**Parents should be aware that requests for a leave of absence will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances.**

**Parents should be aware that when students arrive late, after the register has closed, this is recorded as an unauthorised absence.**

#### PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING

- a. Applications for leave of absence should always be made in advance **in writing** to the Headteacher.
- b. The exceptional circumstances to explain why the absence must be taken during term time should be clearly stated in the letter.
- c. The request should state whether there are siblings in another school in the Hadleigh pyramid because the local schools will liaise before making a decision about authorisation.
- d. The Headteacher will decide whether the leave of absence can be authorised and will contact the parent to inform them of the outcome. **Parents should assume that absence is unauthorised unless there has been written confirmation from the Headteacher that the absence has been authorised.**
- e. Even where there are exceptional circumstances, no requests will be granted during any period of external examinations (the month of May for Year 2 and Year 6 students, the month of June for Year 1 students and public examination periods for High School students).

#### CONSEQUENCES OF TAKING AN UNAUTHORISED HOLIDAY

Taking absence without authorisation will have an impact on a child's learning. Research shows that high attendance at school has a very positive impact on a child's education and future life chances. Parents who choose to take an unauthorised absence must accept that this will have an adverse effect on their child's educational achievement.

**Unauthorised absences are likely to lead to a Fixed Penalty Fine.** The school refers unauthorised absences to the Local Authority to issue a fixed penalty fine where an unauthorised holiday has been taken. When making referrals to the Local Authority, the school will take account of unauthorised absences from the start of the academic year. **Parents no longer receive warning letters regarding Fixed Penalty Fines. Fines will be issued immediately after a referral.** Details of fixed penalty fines are available from the school. The fixed penalty fine is collected and kept by the Local Authority, not the school.

**Unless absence has been authorised in writing because of exceptional circumstances, a fixed penalty fine may be issued.**