



07/03/2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

Holidays in term time – important reminder.

We are writing to remind you of the way school can respond to requests for leave of absence during term time. In general, schools cannot authorise holidays unless they are due to exceptional circumstances. These changes came into effect from our Government back in September 2014. They are aimed at preventing our children from falling behind in their education. 15% of all absences in primary schools are due to children being removed for holidays in term time.

At Park Grove Primary Academy, we have higher than national levels of attendance and we all need to work together to ensure that our children have the best start to their lives. An important element is being present at school to keep up with each new subject and to learn and practise new skills.

The changes to the law mean that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, school is not able to authorise any requests for leave of absence in term time. Previously the Department for Education has said that holidays should not be authorised on the grounds of cost or availability. **Very few requests for leave of absence in term time will be exceptional and therefore most requests will not be authorised.**

Parents/Carers do not have an automatic right for their children to have authorised absences to go on holiday. In some circumstances, parents could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice if they prevent their child from making progress by taking a holiday during term-time which is not authorised by the head teacher. A Fixed Penalty Notice can require a parent to pay a sum of either £60 or £120 per child. Each parent can be issued with a notice for each child so two parents with two children can potentially be issued with four notices.

Exceptional Circumstances

There is some debate about what 'exceptional circumstances' means when deciding whether to grant absence for students during term time. This is the guidance we have been given.

- Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays.



EBOR ACADEMY TRUST

www.parkgrove.ebor.academy | Email admin@pg.ebor.academy | Tel: 01904 554390

Park Grove, York YO31 8LG | Headteacher: Jo Sawyer | CEO: Richard Ludlow

Follow us on Twitter @ParkGroveSchool

Part of the Ebor Academy Trust. Registered office: Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy, West End, Strensall, York YO32 5UH. Registered in England No. 08806335.



- If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise the absence.
- Absence during term time for holidays/vacations is therefore not considered an exceptional circumstance.
- Absences to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.
- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
- Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- Schools may wish to take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
- Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or crisis.
- A child's previous record of attendance will always be taken into account when making decisions.
- It is important to note that head teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

At Park Grove Primary Academy, we pride ourselves on having good punctuality and attendance and, as always, we really do appreciate all the effort our parents/carers put into supporting their children's education.

If you have any queries or questions in relation to any of the information in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Miss J Sawyer
Headteacher
Head.parkgroveprimary@york.gov.uk

Miss N Slater
Pupil Support Team
natalie.slater@york.gov.uk