LONG MEADOW SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mr Philip Gray Bed (Hons) CANTAB, NPQH

Dear Parents / Carers

**Attendance and Authorised ‘Leave of Absence’ in Exceptional Circumstance**

As I am sure you are aware, legislation was introduced in September 2013 resulting in all term time holidays being treated as unauthorised absences except in the most exceptional of circumstances.

From 13th April 2015, our parents were made aware that we will begin the process of issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) when children’s absence is unauthorised for a period of 10 sessions or 5 days had started.

When looking to request absence from school, parents will need to fully complete a ‘Leave of Absence’ form at least 2 weeks prior to the request. In most circumstances, you will be required to meet with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.

Please ensure that these are completed accurately as sadly, we have been made aware of families providing the school with inaccurate information in order for a visit to be authorised. Sometimes this information has been passed to us by other parents and at other times the children have indicated to us the true nature of visits. We have also been provided with inaccurate information on the dates for returning to school. As I am sure you can imagine, this puts the school in a very difficult situation.

It is essential to point out that children have 13 weeks each year for holidays, including 6 weeks in the summer holidays. Whilst we appreciate that travelling in the summer is more expensive, it is vital that we value the importance of regular attendance at school. Government data clearly shows the link between attendance and achievement and dispels the myth that a holiday won’t have an impact on their learning. (DfE-‘The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4’ – February 2015)

Family holidays will never be authorised during term time and this includes ‘surprise’ holidays and events. When booking holidays, we strongly advise parents to check term dates which are available on the school website. Please note – All requests for ‘Leave of Absence’ will automatically be recorded as unauthorised, regardless of circumstances, unless copies of flight tickets are attached.

Yours faithfully

Philip Gray

Headteacher

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**MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL**

**APPLICATION FOR PUPIL’S LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

From 1st September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 mean that parents have no entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances only and the Headteacher may only authorise an absence if they are satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. In most cases the leave granted in these exceptional circumstances will be for a maximum of 5 days. In the event of a parent / carer requesting leave in exceptional circumstances, they may be asked provide additional supporting information. Please note that holidays will not be considered an exceptional circumstance.

These amendments mean that, from 1st September 2013, penalty fines for parents and carers taking children out of school in unauthorised circumstances will be imposed more strictly by the Local Authority. Parents and/or carers may receive a ‘Fixed Penalty Notice’ (FPN) from the Local Authority if they take their child out of school during term time without consent from the school. From September 2013 these FPN cost £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days of issue and £120 per child per parent if paid between 22 and 28 days from date of issue. If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days then the parent(s) or carer(s) may be prosecuted under S444 (1) of the Education Act, 1996 for the period of non- attendance and is subject to a fine up to £1,000 per parent Further information on changes to the legislation can be found at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance>

This form should be completed by the Parent/Guardian and forwarded to the Headteacher **a minimum of two weeks before** the absence is required except in emergency situations. We strongly advise that travel arrangements are not made until you have received notification of the headteacher’s decision. The second part of the form will be returned to you when a decision on authorisation has been made. In the event of no form being submitted, it is likely that an unauthorised absence will be recorded.

Our definition of ‘parent’ generally means those who have day to day responsibility for a child, including:

* All natural parents, whether married or not
* Any person who has parental responsibility for a child
* Any person who has care of a child, (ie - lives with and looks after the child)

I request leave of absence for my child / Children

NAME: CLASS:

NAME: CLASS:

NAME: CLASS:

**FROM: TO:**

**(inclusive dates please)**

They will be travelling with (Names of Adults)

**Exceptional Circumstance:**

**PLEASE INCLUDE COPIES OF YOUR CHILD’S FLIGHT TICKETS FOR OVERSEAS TRAVEL**

Signature of Parent/Guardian: …………………………………….………………… Date: …….………………………

# FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

% Attendance to date: Leave of absence is authorised for days

Number of days requested: Leave of absence is not authorised days

Number of days already taken to date:

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TO: Parent/Guardian of pupil

NAME: ……………………………………………………..………………….. CLASS: …………………….……………

Leave of absence requested from …………………………………………… to ……………………………..………….

REASON: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Leave of absence is authorised for days

Leave of absence is not authorised for days

Signature of Headteacher: …………………………………………………..… Date: …………………….……..

Please contact the Headteacher if you would like to discuss this further.

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Dear Parents / Carers

**School Absence and Attainment**

The Government’s Department for Education has recently released data which demonstrates very clearly the link between absence and underachievement in schools.

The data shows that the more days a child misses, the less likely they are to reach expected levels and beyond.

For example, children who have 100% attendance, have a 92% chance of achieving the expected level at the end of year 6 and a 51% chance of gaining a level beyond.

However, when attendance reaches 90%, the figures fall significantly to 68% achieving an expected level and only 16% going beyond this.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Attendance | Expected Standard | Above Expected Standard |
| 100% | 92% | 51% |
| 96-99% | 86% | 37% |
| 91-95% | 77% | 26% |
| 86-90% | 68% | 16% |
| 81-85% | 59% | 11% |

As you will be aware, holidays in term time are no longer being authorised and are subject to fixed penalty notices being issued. A child who has ten days off school for a holiday will achieve less than 95% attendance for the year, almost halving their chances of gaining a level beyond expectations.

I very much hope you find the information useful and helpful in making decisions about your child’s future.

Yours faithfully

Philip Gray

Headteacher