



September 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE (HOLIDAYS) IN TERM TIME

We know that you as parents/carers want the best for your child and that having a good education helps to open up more opportunities in adult life. Bearing this in mind, I would like to include a regular reminder regarding the law, relating to absences and holidays taken during term time:

- a parent's duty to ensure that their child attends regularly at school, where the child is a registered pupil at school
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability for schools and local authorities to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

As parents you have a legal duty to ensure that your children attend school on a regular basis. The Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent to "fail to secure their child's regular attendance at the school". Amendments to the 2006 Regulations remove any reference to *family holidays, extended leave and the statutory threshold of ten school days*. The amendments also make it very clear that **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The amendments give **parents no entitlement** to take their child out of school or take them out for a holiday during term time and require the Headteacher and Governing Body to determine what the exceptional circumstances are. The decision will be made by me, the Principal, and I will use my discretion to consider each request individually. Absences will only be authorised where satisfactory evidence has been provided. It is the schools' responsibility to record attendance and follow up any absence. The Governors have made it clear that they will support the Principal and Education Welfare Service in promoting high levels of attendance and taking action where there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence.

Requesting a Leave of Absence:

To request a Leave of Absence, parents must complete a Leave of Absence (LOA) form which are available from the school office in paper form or can be downloaded and printed from the school website (Key Information / Holidays/absences in Term Time)

The LOA form can either be handed into the school office or scanned and emailed to:

office@laceygreen.cheshire.sch.uk.



Any requests, made for a holiday to be taken in the academic year 2023 – 2024 or thereafter, which is not considered by the Principal to be exceptional in circumstances, could result in a fine. If parents, contrary to what the school has said, still decide to take their child out of school for a leave of absence then the absence will be coded as **unauthorised**. This may lead to the school referring the matter to the Local Authority requesting a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds the parents have failed to secure their child's regular attendance	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds the parents have failed to secure their children's regular attendance

(NB: Definition of Parent: natural parent OR person who has responsibility for the care of a child).

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence in any 2 consecutive half terms,
- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term time or delayed return from extended holidays
- **Persistent late arrival at school**, i.e. after the register has closed, **in any 2 consecutive half terms**. "Persistent" means at least 10 instances of late

(Please refer to the Attendance Policy on our website)

I know that some parents/carers will find these measures severe but we believe that regular and high attendance is in every pupil's best interests and helps to maximise their achievements and enjoyment of school. Evidence shows that children with poor attendance are unlikely to succeed academically.

All schools have a statutory obligation to provide information to the Local Authority and the DFE regarding attendance and the Education Welfare Service monitors attendance in all schools. This letter reflects accurately the current legislation and as a school, we have a duty to point this out to parents/carers.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Dooley

Principal