POLEHAMPTON CE SCHOOLS AND NURSERY
"Let Your Light Shine" (Matthew 5:16)

Gratitude - Friendship - Perseverance - Forgiveness - Honesty - Compassion

Polehampton CE Infant & Nursery School
Hermitage Drive, Twyford RG10 9HS
0118 934 0246

Polehampton CE Junior School
Kibblewhite Crescent, Twyford RG10 9AX
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APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

The Polehampton Schools & Nursery, The Keys Academy Trust, Wokingham Borough Council and the government all believe that absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on pupils' education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that there may be exceptional reasons which may justify authorisation of an absence by the school.

Please be advised that Wokingham's Children's Services and the Department for Education have advised schools to only authorise leave of absence/holidays in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, the school will not approve any absence in term time, except in such circumstances. Please complete the section below and return to school at least four weeks before the requested absence where at all possible. The school will endeavour to respond to your request within 5 working days.

Please be aware that, if holidays are taken without approval, this information will be passed to our Education Welfare Officer. Taking an unauthorised holiday is a criminal offence and may result, depending on the circumstances of each case, in either a Penalty Notice being issued or Prosecution in the Magistrates Court. A Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning.

Fixed Penalty Notices for term-time absence

A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is a fine issued when a parent fails to ensure that their child attends school regularly. It is an alternative to being prosecuted in court.

When may an FPN be issued?

Schools must consider whether an FPN is appropriate when a child has accumulated **10 sessions* of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.**

* One school day consists of two sessions: morning and afternoon. Therefore, 10 sessions is equivalent to five school days.

The sessions:

- do not have to be consecutive;
- may include different types of unauthorised absence;
- can include arriving after the register has closed;
- can span different terms or school years.

Meeting the threshold does not mean that an FPN is issued automatically. The school and local authority must consider the individual circumstances. However, where the absence is an unauthorised holiday, an FPN would normally be issued because attendance support is unlikely to be relevant.

Who issues the fine?

The school records the absence and may request or recommend an FPN. The local authority normally makes the final decision and issues the notice. Payment is made to the local authority, not to the school.

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How much is the fine?

FPNs are issued to each parent, for each child.

Circumstances	Amount
First FPN for that child, paid within 21 days	£80
First FPN paid after 21 days but within 28 days	£160
Second FPN for the same child within three years	£160, payable within 28 days
Third offence involving the same parent and child within three years	No further FPN; other legal action, including prosecution, may be considered

In some cases, a Penalty notice will not be offered at all and the matter referred immediately for Prosecution. In Court, the penalty is a fine of up to £1000 and a Criminal Record.

What happens if I do not pay?

If an FPN is not paid in full within 28 days, the local authority must either withdraw it or consider prosecuting the parent for the original attendance offence.

If convicted, a parent could receive a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or, in the most serious cases, a prison sentence of up to three months. The court may also impose a Parenting Order.

There is no formal right of appeal against an FPN. However, parents should contact the local authority promptly if they believe that the notice contains an error or should be withdrawn.

What should parents do?

If you believe that there are exceptional circumstances:

1. Submit a written request to the school before making arrangements.
2. Explain the circumstances fully and provide any relevant evidence.
3. Wait for the headteacher's decision before booking or confirming the absence.

Further information

More information can be found on the Wokingham Borough Council website or from the Education Welfare Service.

The term "parent"

The term "parent" is as defined under Section 576 Education 1996, meaning the following:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined by the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Tips on completing the form

Please complete this form in full, providing as much detail as possible. Failure to provide sufficient detail may result in a valid exceptional circumstance being unauthorised, which the school takes no responsibility for. If the absence is for religious observance, please include the name and contact of your place of worship.

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Name of pupil/s	
Year group/s	
First date of absence	
Date of return to school	
Total number of <u>sessions</u> absent *(where one half day = one session)*	

Name of parent *(with whom the child resides)*			
Signature of parent		Date of application	

Exceptional reason for absence *(please provide as much detail as possible below, or include additional evidence when submitting this form)*

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Exceptional reason for absence (continued)

For school office to complete

Date received			
Previous academic year's attendance %			
Current overall attendance %			
Authorised absence %		Unauthorised absence %	
Has unauthorised absence already been taken this academic year?			YES / NO

For designated official to complete

Date assessed		Exceptional reason accepted?	YES / NO
Signature			
Reason for decision (if necessary to explain)			
Date decision letter sent			