



## Term Time Holidays and Leave of Absence

After illness, the taking of holidays in term time has been in recent years the single largest cause of absence from schools in England. At Etchells Primary School we believe that holidays in term time are undesirable because of the impact on our pupils' education, and we strongly encourage parents always to take family holidays during the 13 weeks of school holidays which are available to families each year.

Research has shown that there is clear link between levels of attendance and levels of achievement. In short, the more time a pupil misses school, the lower their levels of achievement are likely to be.

Taking holidays in term time has a disruptive effect upon pupils' learning and it is often difficult for pupils to catch up with work that has been missed. It may also suggest to pupils that their education is not an important priority.

With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 the law concerning term time holidays and leave of absence has changed. Previously schools were allowed to authorise pupils to miss up to 10 days school a year for the purpose of family holidays if they felt there were special circumstances which justified it. **This right has now been abolished.** Schools are now only allowed to authorise leave of absence from school for any reason if they are satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances. At Etchells we deal with every application on an individual basis however it is still the case that the circumstances must be exceptional for the absence to be authorised.

The effect of this change means that it is now very unlikely that permission for pupils for leave of absence for holidays or other purposes will be granted. Please be aware that in certain circumstances documentary evidence will also be required to support an application.

## Education Penalty Notices

In line with the policy of other local schools and the Local Authority, parents should be aware that with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 if holidays or other leave of absence are taken during term time without permission they may be issued with Education Penalty Notices (EPNs) by the Local Authority.

Education Penalty Notices are fixed penalty fines of £60 (rising to £120 if unpaid within 21 days) per parent, per child, by the Local Authority.

Please note that Education Penalty Notices are also issued to parents who persistently bring their children to school late. Should your child arrive after the register has closed on more than nine occasions you are likely to be subject to a fixed penalty fine of £60 per parent per child (rising to £120 if unpaid within 21 days). You may also be subject to a fine if your child is absent from school for more than ten sessions without authorisation over a three month period. (Note that each day at school amounts to two sessions, morning and afternoon).

As with holidays we ask that, where possible, appointments are made out of school hours or in the holidays to minimise the disruption of the school day.

## Requests for Leave of Absence

As mentioned above, parents are strongly advised to take holidays during the school holidays. If you wish to request a period of absence for any reason please complete a Leave of Absence Request Form (see appendix 1) **at least four weeks before** the start of the proposed leave (if possible). The completed form should be returned to the school office who will then pass it on to the Headteacher for consideration.

**Forms are available from the school office and may also be downloaded from the school website.**