



## Highfields Independent School and Day Nursery

### Absence Request Policy

Last Reviewed:	Nov 2013	Approved on:	7.06.17
Committee Responsible:	Pupil and Personnel		
Approved by:	Full Govs	Next Review:	30.06.19

## **Responsibilities of parents – the guidance of the DFE**

“Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly. If a child does not attend regularly, parents should work closely with the School and any assigned **Education Welfare Officer** to resolve the problem.

Head teachers can encourage a good working relationship with parents by regularly publicising the arrangements for notifying absence and the schools policy towards authorised absence.

A DFE leaflet ‘Children Missing Education’ (**DFE Publications**) is available for schools and LEAs to distribute to parents.

Reference :

[http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550416/Children\\_Missing\\_Education-statutory\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education-statutory_guidance.pdf)

## **The view of the Highfields School Governing Body**

As a School, we do not encourage or usually endorse the taking of family holidays during term time because of the disruption that this can cause to the education of your child as so much is covered within the curriculum, even in just one week.

However, we do appreciate and are sympathetic to the fact that ‘once in a lifetime opportunities’ do arise or parents work commitments mean that a family may only be able to take a holiday together during term time.

If an Absence Request Form is received without a written explanation for the request being attached, the School will contact the parent so that further information may be gained.

The Headmaster acts as the principal representative of the Governing Body in approving or declining requests for authorised absences. In all cases, the appropriate DCSF guidelines will be consulted and applied. However, as an independent school, it must be noted that the Headmaster has the ultimate right to apply his discretion.

## **Authorised or Unauthorised absence?**

Authorised absence is absence with permission from the Headmaster or other official representative of the school. This includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided (e.g. illness).

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from a Headmaster or other official representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences. The categories of authorised and unauthorised absence are explained in Annex A of Circular 10/99 **Social Inclusion: Pupil Support**. (Attached)

In summary, based upon DFE guidance:

- **Authorised** absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.
- All other absences must be treated as **unauthorised**.

### **Approved educational activities off-site**

The absence of pupils taking part in supervised educational activities outside the school is recorded as 'approved educational activity'. This is equivalent to 'present' for performance table purposes. To avoid confusion in an emergency, schools should not record pupils who are off-site as present. The following activities show when the approved educational activity category can be used:

- field trips and educational visits, in this country and overseas;
- participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities;
- franchised pupils receiving part of their tuition off-site at another location while remaining under overall supervision of the home school (i.e. a flexible arrangement short of formal dual registration). This can include special tuition for dyslexic children and sick children being taught at home but remaining on roll.

### **Family holidays**

DFE guidance is as follows:

Under education law parents may request absence for pupils from school due to a family holiday. It is for schools to determine whether they agree to a family holiday during term time. Schools may authorise absence for this purpose for up to 10 school days in any school year. In exceptional cases schools, may agree to a lengthier period.

In considering any request for holiday absence, schools should look at individual circumstances and take account of:

- the age of the pupil
- the time of year proposed for the trip
- its nature and parents' wishes
- the overall attendance pattern of the pupil
- the pupil's stage of education and progress.

N.B. Absence up to ten days may be approved but there is no set minimum – this is left to the discretion of schools. Schools do not have to approve absence up to and until the ten days have been taken.

### **DFE advice to all Schools**

“Monitoring and controlling school attendance should be a key part of the school objectives. Head teachers should ensure that a clear policy on attendance is in place, which is known to staff, pupils and parents. The policy should be reviewed periodically and staff, pupils and parents should be reminded of its contents.”

Headmaster’s signature: