



Claremont Primary School

Dear Parents/Carers

Request for Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Department for Education has amended the regulations and guidance in relation to absences in term-time. There is now no automatic right to take your child out of school during term time. From September 2013, the Department for Education amended the Pupil Registration Regulations removing the Headteacher ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Following this amendment, requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in 'exceptional circumstances'. An 'exceptional circumstance' would have to be defined as an **unavoidable** cause e.g. a one-off emergency situation which prevents the child from attending school. Equally travel time requests to holiday destinations are also not considered exceptional circumstances. I urge families to support the school by ensuring that taking term-time holidays are not the culture of our community.

Requests for absence (leave) will be considered individually but can only be authorised where there are exceptional circumstances. There is no right of appeal as the authorisation of the absence is the sole responsibility of the Headteacher. The Headteacher cannot give retrospective approval so any request should be **made in advance by at least 2 weeks**.

Exceptional Circumstances may include:

- Family trauma, a serious illness/death of close relative/person to the family
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family
- Attending celebrations in line with culture and/or religion
- Where an employer stipulates that holiday has to be taken during a set period (letter from employer is required as evidence)

All requests for leave of absence must be made using the form on the reverse. Completed forms must be returned to the school office. **Please note that email requests for leave of absence will not be considered unless accompanied by this form.** A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If the absence requested is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and you nonetheless take your child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in line with Local Authority guidance.

In the case of an unauthorised absence the **Local Authority Attendance Service** monitor these. Should the incidence of unauthorised absences be judged of concern Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £80 which increases to £160 if not paid within the first 21 days. If a second penalty notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period, then the charge will be at a flat rate of £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. In both cases, if the Penalty Notice remains unpaid this may result in prosecution by the Kent PRU and Attendance Service.

Claremont has maintained an excellent attendance record for many years. Please be reassured that despite this legislation the school will continue to place the needs of the children first, seek to work with families to overcome barriers to learning and aim to provide the best environment for children and families to thrive and achieve. I have always believed that the vast majority of parents have the wisdom to judge when an absence is in their child's best interests. Claremont however, must be seen to act in line with regulations.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Candi Roberts
Headteacher

