



Student Leave of Absence Policy & Procedure

Term Time Leave Policy

*The school has adopted the following Term Time Leave Policy
in conjunction with Sundon Park Junior School and Cheynes Infants School*

INTRODUCTION

Lealands High School policies are designed to support the school ethos, aims and vision. Lealands is a positive learning community which is fully inclusive to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

Our aims are outlined in our Home School Agreement. We want all members of the school community to:

- Enjoy learning
- Be enquiring
- Achieve the best
- Feel safe and secure
- Be happy
- Be well cared for and supported
- Be challenged and make good progress
- Be prepared for a bright future
- Make a valued contribution
- Enjoy a well ordered and stimulating learning environment

Our vision is to be:

“A centre of excellence, nurturing all learners, whatever their needs or interests, instilling high expectations for all and preparing young people for life and a bright future.”

All staff are required to uphold the ethos and aims of the school through the application of this and all school policies agreed by governors.

The Education (Student Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and came into force from 1st September 2013. The amendments remove references to “holiday” from school and extended leave of absence as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

HEADTEACHERS MAY NOT GRANT ANY LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME UNLESS THERE ARE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

The law does not give any entitlement to parents/carers to take their child on holiday during term time. Headteachers have the discretion to authorise leave of absence only in **EXCEPTIONAL** circumstances and it is only for the Headteacher to determine what is truly exceptional. School days are precious; children only attend school 190 out of 365 days. There are 175 days a year which parents/carers can use for any activities other than school.

EXAMPLES OF NON-EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- Going on holiday
- Preference of holiday dates or availability of cheap holidays/accommodation
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Preference for undergoing medical treatment abroad
- Relatives getting married overseas
- Religious events
- Poor weather conditions at certain times
- Alternative travel arrangements not being fully utilised, resulting in a delay in returning to school

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE WILL NOT BE AUTHORISED IN THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES:

- Student's attendance is less than 97% in the current academic year and 95% in the previous 12 months
- In SATs Years 2 and 6; GCSE or any other public examination years. This includes Years 2, 6, 10 and 11.
- In a transition year - Year 3, Year 7
- At the beginning of any academic year
- Retrospectively
- If there are any other attendance concerns such as poor punctuality, student's ability to catch up on the work missed, etc
- If leave of absence has already been taken in the same school year.

We will also take into account the following:

- The student's general absence/attendance record eg unauthorised absences
- Proximity of SATS and public examinations
- Amount of time requested
- Age of student
- Length of the proposed leave
- Student's ability to catch up on work
- Student's educational needs
- General welfare of the student
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- When the request was made

APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Requests must be made in advance or the absence cannot legally be authorised. All requests must be made at least two weeks in advance to the Headteacher by completing the school application form. A parent/carer with whom the child resides must make the application even though the student may not be taking the proposed leave with them. The form must be fully completed and you will receive a written response confirming if the request will be authorised or not.

If leave is granted and you are travelling abroad you will need to supply the school with confirmation of your return flight tickets, such as bringing a copy of the flight tickets into the school reception.

EXAMPLES OF EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- Close family member bereavement (no more than 3 days)
- Immediate family member funeral (no more than 5 days if travel abroad is involved)
- Immediate family member wedding (no more than 5 days if travel abroad is involved)
- Unavoidable delay in travel arrangements due to adverse weather conditions eg volcanic ash
- Unavoidable delay in travel due to being deemed unfit to travel by medical practitioner, with proof provided to the school for the period of absence. (This presupposes that some leave has already been granted)
- For service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside of term time, if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the student's education

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

If you take your child out of school without the school's prior authorisation the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (which is illegal) and noted in your child's records. Leave of absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher.

Where a parent/carer has taken their child on leave of absence during term time for 5 consecutive school days or more, without the Headteacher's authorisation, Luton Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice. In these circumstances a warning will not be given. Penalty notices are per parent, per child as appropriate, so if there are 2 parents both will have to pay the fine. —

Penalty Notices will need to be paid within 21 days at £60 or £120 within 28 days, part payments are not accepted. There is no appeal process for a penalty notice. Unpaid Penalty Notices, result in prosecution for the absence in the magistrate's court. Please note all adults with care of the child are usually liable. Penalty Notices are an alternative to prosecution for failing to ensure a child's regular attendance and will only be used once per pupil in an academic year before prosecution takes place.

FAILURE TO RETURN TO SCHOOL ON THE DATE EXPECTED

If there is a reason which delays the student in returning to school the parent/carer must inform the school immediately. The school will require evidence of this issue and will then decide whether the absence will be authorised. For any travel arrangements outside of the UK we require proof of return flights, prior to the leave being taken. This may prevent you from receiving unauthorised absence for your child and being fined if they are unable to return on the date expected. Each case will be assessed individually and medical evidence from abroad will not be accepted routinely as evidence that a student was unable to attend school. Dates will need to be checked and a translator may be required to clarify details of the medical certificate.

ROLL REMOVAL

A student can be removed from roll in either of these circumstances:

- If you take your child on leave of absence which has been authorised by the school but your child fails to return on the agreed date, any extra time absence from school will be counted as unauthorised. If your child fails to return within ten days of the expected date of return then the school may remove your child from the school roll and notify the Local Authority accordingly.
- Or if your child has 20 days continuous unauthorised absence.