



RIVINGTON FOUNDATION Primary School



TERM TIME LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

Tuesday 28th November 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Now that Covid restrictions have disappeared, and after a difficult couple of years, we understand that there may be a temptation to take children on a holiday. However, whilst we recognise there will be a need and benefit to this, we must also stress the importance of children attending school regularly given how much time will have been missed in school during the pandemic.

As the Government have been clear, attendance at school is a national priority and ensuring regular attendance is a legal responsibility of parents/carers. Therefore, we thought it was important to remind you of the legislation and potential consequences of any unauthorised absence during term time. This means that absence during term time is only permitted in 'exceptional circumstances'. This does not typically include holidays.

In line with Lancashire LA guidance, we would like to highlight the following points:

- a **leave of absence request must be made** in advance of the child being absent;
- the importance of providing reasons and all relevant information that you would want to be considered should be noted at the time of the leave of absence request and not at a much later stage;
- the decision of what is 'exceptional circumstance' or whether a leave of absence can be authorised, is entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion (which is informed by DfE advice and guidance);
- any disagreement between parents/carers and schools cannot be considered by the Attendance and Prosecution Service and should be dealt with by school;
- any action taken by the Council following a referral for an unauthorised leave of absence (e.g. penalty notice or prosecution) will be based upon the leave of absence request, any information provided at that time and the subsequent decision of the Head Teacher;
- any additional information received from parents in response to any action taken by the Council will be considered as mitigation but will not necessarily result in these actions being withdrawn.

At Rivington Foundation Primary School, we try to work with parents/carers proactively to encourage good attendance. We make it clear that we aim for at least 97% attendance each year and, where attendance is below this target, we have to consider very carefully whether any leave of absence would be authorised. Furthermore, if a child is persistently absent from school (90% or below) then authorised absence is extremely unlikely for any reason.

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'Wear Your P.I.N. with Pride'**



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Where a child has a level of unauthorised absence which meets the criteria for a referral, it is our common policy and practice that these referrals are automatically made.

When making decisions about whether to authorise any leave of absence, we consider a child's current and previous attendance, their year group, attainment levels and any other relevant information. As part of this decision, we may also engage in a discussion with parents/carers about the specific circumstances related to the leave of absence request.

Whilst a decision is at the Head Teacher's discretion, please do not be offended or take it personally if a request is declined. Whilst it is the Head Teacher that has to make the final decision, this decision has to be taken in line with policy and DfE advice and guidance.

A referral for unauthorised absence to the Attendance & Prosecution Service could result in a penalty notice being issued. **Penalty notices, when issued, tells the parents/carers to pay a fine of £60 (if paid within 21 days) or £120 if paid within 28 days (from September 2013).** Furthermore, non-payment can lead to court action being taken and result in a prosecution. Further information is available at:

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/absence-from-school/#:~:text=If%20your%20child%20is%20unable,to%20check%20on%20the%20attendance.>

If you have any questions then please do not hesitate to contact myself. Alternatively, please take a look at the information on our website page:

<https://www.rivingtonprimaryschool.co.uk/school-attendance/>

Regards,

Mrs. Sarah Annette
Headteacher