



Keyworth Primary School

Part of the Bessemer and Keyworth Federation

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Executive Headteacher: Sarah Beard

Head of School: Ray Capper

Thursday 3rd October 2019

Dear Parents / Carers,

Requests for absence from school

A few weeks ago, I informed parents / carers on the newsletter to say that we are unable to authorise absence from school during term time unless considered exceptional in-line with Southwark's Attendance Procedure. We have still been receiving requests for children to have weeks off school to travel abroad so I have included the guidelines below. We are **unable** to authorise requests for travel abroad for holidays or for extended periods of time:

*"You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is, however, a discretionary power held by Headteacher's to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances **only**. This is **not an entitlement**. There is no longer a provision in law for Headteacher's to authorise an absence for the purpose of a term time holiday."*

We are also only able to authorise absence for **exceptional circumstances**.

Examples of exceptional absence

The Headteacher may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- *If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays;*
- *Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue;*
- *The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;*
- *Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required;*
- *To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance.*

For each of the above circumstances, the guidelines state that proof is provided to the school. Even for circumstances where absences are exceptional, **we can only authorise a few days off school**. All other absences will be unauthorised. If you believe that your child requires absence

from school and the reason given meets the criteria for being exceptional, then you need to complete an *Absence Request Form* which can be collected from the school office. In considering whether we can authorise any absence, we will use the above criteria for exceptional absence and answer the following questions:

- *Does the child have attendance above 95% for the academic year?*
- *Are they going to miss any term time examinations?*
- *Have they had any authorised absence within the last 12 months?*

If you decide to take your child / children out of school for this period without it being authorised, the absence will be marked unauthorised and I will have to contact the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice which can result in a £60.00 fine per parent.

At Keyworth, we have a duty of care to ensure that all children attend school regularly. Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you can prepare your child for success - both in school and in life. Regular attendance at school is vital to help children achieve and get the best possible start in life.

I hope that Keyworth's and Southwark's position on attendance to school has been clarified.

Regards,

Ray Capper

Head of School

