



Chippenham Partnership of Schools

Absence Policy

Principles

Any absence has a detrimental impact on a child's education. Absence can and should be avoided. 90% attendance is the equivalent of missing half a day of school every week. Children are required to attend for 190/365 days per year. If parents request leave during term time, head teachers are expected to uphold government guidance, and are required to be proactive in discouraging absence.

This policy has been written collaboratively by all Chippenham Partnership schools and associated Governing Bodies in line with Wiltshire local authority guidance. Schools within the Partnership will adhere to this policy, ensuring consistency and clarity of information to parents.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act (1996) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis; children become of statutory school age the term after which they become 5 years old. Parents do not have an automatic entitlement to any absence during term time.

Requesting a Leave of Absence in term time

- Families wishing to request a Leave of Absence must complete and submit a request form at least two weeks prior to the event. At the point of request parents must provide all supporting evidence. Any evidence offered at a later stage may not be considered.
- Any application for Leave of Absence will not be considered more than 9 months in advance.
- Leave of Absence can only be requested by the parent/carer with whom the child resides.

Authorisation

Only in **exceptional circumstances** are head teachers able to authorise Leave of Absence during term time. It will be necessary to discuss circumstances with the head teacher who will follow the government guidance in granting or declining a request.

Unauthorised absence

Where Leave of Absence is declined by the school it will be recorded as a 'G' (unauthorised holiday) and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued to parents by Wiltshire Council if it totals 10 sessions or more.

Where absence has not been authorised and parents/carers proceed in taking their children out of school then the local authority may issue a fixed penalty notice. This is **£120 per parent per child**, where the child resides with both parents (reduced to £60 if paid within 28 days).

Please see Local Authority leaflet entitled 'PENALTY NOTICES FOR HOLIDAYS TAKEN DURING TERM TIME, s444A and s444B Education Act 1996, Information for Parents and Carers'.

Frogwell, Ivy Lane, King's Lodge, Charter, St Mary's, St Peter's, St Paul's, Redland, Monkton Park, Queen's Crescent, Langley Fitzurse CE, Christian Malford CE, Lacock CE, By Brook Valley CE, Stanton St Quintin, Kingston St Michael CE, Sutton Benger CE, St Nicholas's, Sheldon, Hardenhuish and Abbeyfield schools



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Frequently Asked Questions

Parent 1

Question: *My work means that I cannot take holiday during the school summer holidays. Can I take my children away during October?*

Answer: *There are many opportunities, other than the summer holiday period, for family holidays. Please use the week-long breaks at half-term or the two weeks available at Christmas or Easter.*

Parent 2

Question: *I'd like to add an additional day's holiday onto the October half term break.*

Answer: *The government guidance does not allow me to authorise leave in term-time. Ofsted also look very poorly on this.*

Parent 3

Question: *My brother is getting married in Germany. We would like leave of absence to attend.*

Answer: *I am required by law to authorise only 2-days for travel to a family wedding, and one day to attend. No more than 3 days can be authorised.*

Parent 4

Question: *The children's grandparents have booked and paid for a holiday in term-time. We have to go.*

Answer: *Holidays in term-time are against government guidance so I am unable to authorise it. Should you choose to go away at this time a penalty notice will have to be served by the local authority.*

Parent 5

Question: *My children receive free school meals. We cannot afford a holiday except in term-time.*

Answer: *Holidays in term-time are against government guidance, given the detrimental impact on learning. Should you choose to go away at this time a penalty notice will be served by the local authority.*

Parent 6

Question: *My child has been invited to go away with Swindon Football Academy during term-time.*

Answer: *I consider this to be an educational opportunity but taking place off-site and am happy to authorise this.*

Parent 7

Question: *My aunt recently passed away. We were very close and feel that we need some time away as a family to cope with this.*

Answer: *The government guidance recommends that only when immediate family are involved should leave be authorised, so unfortunately this will need to be an unauthorised absence.*