



St Gabriel's CE Primary School

Absence During Term Time Policy

Our Vision Statement:

Our aim is to nurture children with the confidence and self-belief to achieve their best;
to have the courage to think for themselves;
to be resilient in their learning and ambitious in their hopes and dreams;
to live in harmony, respecting others;
to search and question throughout life's journey;
to find personal faith;
and to learn about the Gospel of hope and love found in Jesus Christ.

Seeking to nurture:

Sel**F**-belief Cour**A**ge Res**I**llience Ambi**T**ion **H**armony

“Stand firm... be courageous” 1 Corinthians 16:13

Policy Reviewed: Autumn 2025

Next Review: Autumn 2028

Aims

As a school, we will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, set high expectations for every pupil and communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to parents.

Good attendance is seen as a learned behaviour.

Absence During Term Time

DfE regulations are explicit that:

- Headteachers **cannot authorise any leave of absence during term** time unless they are satisfied that there are **exceptional circumstances**.
- **Parents must make an application in advance**. Schools **cannot** grant retrospective approval for **any** leave of absence.
- There is **no entitlement** for parents to take their child on holiday during term-time.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '**exceptional circumstances**'.

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, **at least 2 weeks before the absence**, using school's **Application for Discretionary Leave form**, accessible via the school's website or the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. Where Eid celebrations fall in term time (1 day only per event)

Other possible '**exceptional circumstances**' where the Headteacher may grant term-time absence:

- Immediate family bereavement or marriage for a brief absence (eg 1-2 days)
- Child receiving medical treatment abroad
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes
- Involvement in a public performance

An absence is classified as **Unauthorised**, if the reason is **not acceptable**, for example:

- **Late arrival after 9.30am**, without an acceptable reason
- A birthday
- A shopping trip/day trips
- Brother or sister is ill so all children in the family stay off school
- Not having uniform ready to wear or can't find shoes/coat etc
- Getting up late
- Holidays – unless previously agreed as exceptional circumstances

Five full days or 10 am/pm sessions (which include late arrivals after 9.30am) may result in a penalty notice fine.

Requests for Term Time Absence

Headteachers must always:

- be satisfied that each child's individual circumstances warrant being granted leave;
- take into account the frequency of any such requests, the pupil's attainment, overall attendance and ability to catch up on missed lessons; and then
- determine the number of days, if any, a child can be away from school.

Requests for absence in the period leading up to, or the week of **Year 6 SATs** will, in most circumstances, be routinely refused.

Approval for leave of absence in term time should be a rare, irregular occurrence, only allowed in exceptional circumstances.

Procedures for Parents Requesting Leave of Absence During Term-time

This procedure is required for all absence requests.

- A **Local Authority Application for Discretionary Leave of Absence Form** must be submitted to the Headteacher **in advance** of the requested absence, allowing sufficient time to consider the request and respond appropriately (usually a minimum of two weeks).

A) If an application is granted...

- Parents will be notified in writing of the decision confirming the agreed dates of absence and the date by which the child/children will be expected to return to school.
- This letter will also inform parents of the actions which may be taken if they fail to return on time e.g. the issuing of a penalty notice for unauthorised absence or the child's/children's names being removed from the school roll.

Failure to return by the agreed date...

- In the case of a child/children **granted** leave of absence but the child/children then fail to return to school **within 5 school days** of the agreed return date, a request to **issue a penalty notice** to the parents will normally be made by the school.
- Penalty notices will be issued unless the school is satisfied that the child/children are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause e.g. flight delays. In all circumstances, evidence will need to be provided to substantiate the reasons given. It is the responsibility of parents to inform school of any changes to return dates in advance of/on the date agreed to prevent the commencement of procedures by school to issue a penalty notice.

B) If an application is not granted...

- If permission for discretionary leave is **not granted**, parents will be notified by letter, explaining the reason why the request has been refused **and** warning them of the potential consequences for failing to ensure their child's attendance at school, e.g. the **issuing of penalty notices** and/or the removal of their child/children from the school roll.
- If a parent removes a child/children from school **without seeking prior approval** from the Headteacher **or disregards the Headteachers decision** to refuse an application for absence, then the procedures for issuing a penalty notice **will** commence with failure to return to school within 5 days.

Penalty Notices – costs and usage

The circumstances in which a penalty notice for non-attendance may be issued include:

- **Parentally condoned absence**
- **Unauthorised holidays in term time**
- **Unwarranted delayed return from discretionary leave (without school agreement)**
- **Persistent late arrival** after the register has closed

Penalty Notices - costs

Education Penalty Notices are required to be issued to each liable parent/carer per child, i.e. in the case of a family with both parents and two children who are taken out of school without the Headteacher's permission, 4 x separate Penalty Notices will be issued.

- Penalty notices will be charged at the rate of **£160 per parent per child**. This can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent, for the same child, **within a rolling 3-year period** will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days, with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (**equivalent to 5 days**) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A **maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued** to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).