



Wentworth

Primary School

Headteacher: Mr P. W. Langridge BEd, NPQH
Deputy Headteacher: Mr L. Pollock BA, (Hons)

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL – THESE WILL ONLY BE AGREED FOR
EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES - PLEASE DO NOT ASK FOR HOLIDAYS, OR DAYS FOR
BIRTHDAY TREATS**

There appears to be a misconception as to taking leave of absence during term time. The legal situation set out in the Education Act 2002 and amendments 2006 states that parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive a full time education and these Acts place a legal responsibility for enforcing regular school attendance on the school and the Local Education Authority. This responsibility is delegated to School Liaison Officers. The school has to support legal action against parents/carers whose children fail to sustain an acceptable level of attendance and where parents/carers are failing to fulfil their responsibility.

We have attempted to take a pragmatic approach and deal with requests on an individual basis. This has proved difficult and so the Governors of the school have decided on the following:-

- **Only in 'exceptional circumstances' permission may be granted by the Headteacher for leave of absence to be taken during term time. Application for leave of absence must be made with at least 4 weeks' notice in writing with evidence. The fundamental principles for defining exceptional circumstances are rare, significant, unavoidable and short and by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.**
- **No leave of absence will be authorised in the first month of an academic year (September). This is a vital period of assimilation after the summer school break.**
- **Leave of absence taken without the Headteacher's permission will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Parents who absent their children for non-essential reasons, such as shopping, looking after a family member, taking a sibling to school, birthdays, family visits to theme parks etc, going to airport to meet relatives/friends, waiting for utility workers etc will be recorded as unauthorised.**
- **No leave of absence during internal or external examinations.**
- **If your child is in need of timetabled support.**

During term time, pupil attendances are closely monitored. 10 **unauthorised absences** = 5 days, morning and afternoon = 2 will begin the penalty notice process. The school will request the Kent County Council's Attendance Service to issue a formal warning letter to parents.

This will initially set a period of 15 school days within which the student must incur no unauthorised absence. Late arrival will also equate to unauthorised absence. If a pupil has an unauthorised absence during this period, a Penalty Notice will be issued by first class post.

Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days will incur a fine of £60 per parent. This will increase to £120 per parent if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of a Penalty Notice could trigger a fast track prosecution process under provisions of Section 444 1996 Education Act, which will be dealt with at a Magistrates Court. If a pupil takes 10 sessions = 5 days or more **leave of absence unauthorised**, a Penalty Notice will be requested without any formal warning letter.

This letter is to clarify to parents the law by which the school is monitored to ensure its pupils receive the full education that is provided. Children's school year is 190 days and it is expected that they are at school for 190 days. If your child's attendance is below 90-94% academic progress will be affected significantly.

Mr P Langridge
Headteacher

Wentworth Drive, Dartford, Kent DA1 3NG Tel: 01322 225694/220451 Fax 01322 291562
Email: Headteacher@wentworth.kent.sch.uk
Website www.wentworthonline.co.uk



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