

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

QUEEN BOUDICA COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

PREPARED BY:

Craig Duncan
Headteacher

REVIEWED & APPROVED BY:

Curriculum Committee
(February 2016)

ISSUE AND REVISION RECORD

<u>Date</u>	<u>Issue No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Review Date</u>
May 2009	01	Original	April 2011
May 2013	02	Review	May 2014
December 2013	03	Numerous changed linked to new guidelines	December 2015
February 2016	04	Clarification of criteria for exceptional circumstances	February 2018

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

At Queen Boudica Primary School we believe that children who regularly attend are more likely to achieve at school and to maintain closer friendships with other children. We expect Staff, Governors and Parents to support excellent attendance.

The 'Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 – amended from the 1st September 2013 – removes the right of parents and carers to apply for up to ten days holiday during term time. Headteachers are no longer permitted to grant leave of absence during term time, unless the circumstances are exceptional. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Circumstances when Leave of Absence may be granted:

All term time holiday or leave of absence requests will be refused unless the request meets the following criteria for 'exceptional circumstances':

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting.
- Leave for members of the Police, Fire Service or other emergency services, where the employer provides a written letter to the effect that leave cannot be taken at any other time.
- Significant family events eg. parent/carer's wedding.
- Cultural and Religious requirements.
- Occasions when the pupil is to be educated off site.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Circumstances when Leave of Absence will not be granted:

- A family holiday.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Availability of cheaper holidays or desired accommodation.
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods.
- Beginning of a new academic year.
- Visiting family and friends who have different school holidays.
- Children with high levels of absence (below 95% attendance for the previous term, regardless of which academic year the term falls in).
- In the run up to (within the term) and during National Tests/Assessments.
- When the leave is taken without prior permission from the Headteacher.

To give every pupil the best possible chance of good attendance, term time absence will no longer be considered. The following 'special circumstances' cannot be considered 'exceptional' and are no longer authorised:

- Where family members book surprise holidays and treats without liaising with each other. All should be kept informed of our expectations and holiday dates, which are always published at least 12 months in advance.
- Where employers do not allow employees to book holidays at a preferred time. Holidays should be booked early and within the 12 school holiday weeks across the year and employers should be made aware that children cannot be taken out of school, even if the employer provides a supporting letter. A significant number of families are self – employed and even in those circumstances, there can be no flexibility in term time.
- Families may feel that it would be good for the family to get away for a break from family circumstances that have been affecting them, but generally children benefit from the stability of day to day schooling and every 6 weeks there is always at least a week when time away can be taken

There can never be a definitive list of exceptional circumstances, but to be in line with the expectations of other local schools, this would generally be where there has been an exceptional event causing shock and distress, the wedding or funeral of a close family member (mother, father, auntie or uncle), the return of a parent in the services and religious observance.

Procedure for requesting Leave of Absence:

- Parents/Carers to ask for the time **before taking the leave.**
- Parents will receive equal treatment from the school in terms of requests.
- Appropriate forms to be completed and returned in good time.
- Any absence which has not been agreed in advance by the Head Teacher is marked as unauthorised absence
- Section 7 of the 'Education Act' 1996 it states that: "if absence is unauthorised the Education Welfare Service can issue a penalty notice, including a fine, which can result in prosecution if it is not paid."

Penalty Notices:

It is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether or not to apply a penalty notice, there is no automatic expectation. If the school decides to take this course of action, the Local Authority expects that the application for a penalty notice be sent to them within 2 weeks of the pupil's return to school following the period of unauthorised absence. A penalty notice will be considered by the Local Authority if any of the following criteria apply:

- There have been 10 or more sessions (5 consecutive days or more) of unauthorised leave during an academic year
- and**
- Attendance is below 90% during the preceding 12 weeks before the leave was taken; *or*
 - The leave was taken during the month of September; *or*

- The leave was taken during a period of tests or examinations (SATs tests, Phonics Screening, etc.); *or*
- It is the second leave of absence taken within one academic year; *or*
- The pupil is in Year 6

It is essential that the school makes parents and carers aware of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued, which could lead to prosecution for non-attendance if they fail to pay. This information will appear in the school prospectus, school website and in school newsletters from time to time.