



Term Time Absence Policy

Approved by Governors

Written: September 2024

Review: September 2026 (or in light of new legislation)



Whitefield Infant School and Nursery Term Time Absence Policy



Introduction

Section 7 of the Education Act (1996) and Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Aug 2024) places a duty on parents to ensure that their children, of compulsory school age, attend school regularly.

At Whitefield Infant School we believe that students who have regular attendance are more likely to reach their full potential and achieve the best possible results. Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any financial savings you make by taking your child away during term time are offset by the cost to your child's education. This Policy supports legislation which makes it clear that **Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Leave of Absence in Term Time

There is NO automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.

Any request for leave of absence for a child must be made, **in advance**, by a parent who resides with the child using the 'Application for leave of absence' form (available from the school office). It is important that parents understand that:

1. Requests will NOT be authorised unless the circumstances surrounding the request are considered, by the school, to be exceptional.
2. Leave in term time will NOT be agreed by school at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, as exceptional.
3. Leave taken without prior notification will not be authorised
4. Absence taken without sight of return flights will also not be authorised

In considering any request, we will look at various factors, these include:

- A pupil's current attendance. The school have a target attendance of 96% for each pupil. We will look at whether a child's attendance is a concern because it is already below this target or is likely to fall below this target if the requested absence is taken.
- The timing of the request - When a pupil is just starting at the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period and your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible. Where possible, pupils should NOT be absent immediately before or during assessment periods.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

The Home School Support Officer and/or the Head Teacher will meet every parent/carers who has submitted an 'application for leave of absence' form. In making a decision as to whether to authorise an absence or not the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

If a request for leave is agreed - it is expected that your child will NOT be taken out of school before the agreed first absence date and will be back in school on the agreed return to school date. Any absence taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of an agreed period, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice. The current penalty notice charge is £160 per parent, per child, payable within 21 days of receiving the fine.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed date - In these circumstances re-admission could NOT be guaranteed.

PENALTY NOTICE FINES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS CHANGING

1

FIRST OFFENCE

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular Attendance the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

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SECOND OFFENCE (WITHIN 3 YEARS)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days. No reduced rate will be offered.

The following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

3

THIRD OFFENCE AND ANY FURTHER OFFENCES (WITHIN 3 YEARS)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on a Parents future DBS certificate, due to failure to safeguard a child's education.

10 SESSIONS (5 DAYS) OF UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE IN A 10-WEEK PERIOD

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.

Please follow the link for the Publication that will start from 19th August 2024.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

The specific circumstances when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8(1)(f)(i-iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 make it clear that, (1A) Subject to paragraph (2), leave of absence shall not be granted unless-

- (a) An application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and
- (b) The proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

Therefore, Whitefield Infant School will NOT grant any leave of absence during term time unless -

1. A fully completed and signed application has been submitted to the school on the 'Application for Leave of Absence from Maintained Schools' form, available from the school office.
2. The circumstances of the request are considered exceptional by school.
3. Parents have provided any requested evidence to support any claimed exceptional circumstance.
4. Full flight itineraries (including return travel arrangements) have been supplied to the school.

Whitefield Infant School considers each and every request for term time absence individually. However, requests will NOT be authorised unless the Head Teacher accepts that the **circumstances are exceptional**. Even then, conditions may be placed on the length of absence which will be authorised **and will not authorise extended periods of time**. Remote Learning will not be provided for any term-time absence requests.