

# Low Furness CE Primary School

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Tuesday 15<sup>h</sup> October, 2024

## New LA & Dfe attendance guidance 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following a meeting with our LA inclusion and attendance office, Mrs Nicky Braund-Smith, I am writing to you to inform you of recent changes to the law around attendance. This letter is directly in line with the new law that the Government has set, and that we must follow.

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The Department for Education allows a Head Teacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time only in “exceptional circumstances”. The criteria for what is exceptional is set by the Government and this will be scrutinised by Mrs N. Braund-Smith.

Any absence from school will disrupt your child’s learning. You may consider that a holiday will be educational, but your child will still miss out on the teaching that their peers will receive whilst your child is away. Children returning from a leave of absence during term time are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. Teachers then must give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement for your child and other students in the class This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

You need to request a leave of absence by completing the form attached to this letter. If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence this **will be recorded as unauthorised leave**. A “G” code in the register.

**All unauthorised absences, including holidays that have not been sanctioned by the headteacher, are accumulated and parents who fail to ensure regular attendance of their children at school can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The amount is £80 (per parent per child) if paid within 21 days and £160 (per parent per child) if paid between 22 and 28 days. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in prosecution, except in limited circumstances.**

*‘Learning Together Through Faith’*



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The criteria for when fixed penalty notices will be considered:

- There have been 10 sessions (5 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence due to leave taking during an academic year.
- Attendance is below 95% during the preceding 12 weeks before the leave was taken, and the absence is unauthorised.

All leave of absence requests must be completed on the attached form, letters and emails will not be accepted. This should be returned to the school at least 14 days before the start of the holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

In considering the decision whether to authorise, the following will be considered: -

- Reasons given for the holiday; is it exceptional?

**Exceptional circumstances include:**

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. <
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above, the Headteacher can consult with the Local Authority inclusion officer for school attendance prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

I hope you will support our efforts to raise attendance and attainment at our school.

Yours sincerely,

**CR-S**

Mrs Rowland-Smith

Headteacher