

## **ATTENDANCE**

By law, all children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) must receive full-time education. Along with this is the legal responsibility for making sure that children attend regularly. If they do not, parents will be contacted by the school and may even be contacted by the Local Authority via the Educational Welfare Service.

Schools are open for 195 days per year, leaving 170 other days for leisure time. If a child is absent for an average of one day per week they will miss TWO YEARS of education between Reception and Year 11. If a student misses an average of one HALF day per week in their secondary education, they are likely to obtain a full grade lower in their GCSEs than other students.

### **FAMILY HOLIDAYS AND EXTENDED TRIPS DURING TERM TIME**

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Leave of absence may not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which case the Headteacher determines the number of school days that a child can be away from school.

If holiday leave is taken without the school's prior approval, this may be viewed as undermining the good order and discipline of the school and could be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education and their future earning potential.

Guidance states that schools may agree "holiday leave" in two exceptional circumstances, such as:

1. For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.
2. When a family need to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis (or a CLOSE family wedding).

Holidays which are taken for the following reasons are not authorised:

- Availability of cheap flights
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Overlap with beginning or end of term.

The school is also experiencing an increasing number of requests for "odd" days off. These, unless in exceptional circumstances similar to those above, will also be unauthorised.

It is our wish that you have complete clarity in understanding our situation and the reasons for refusing the majority of the requests that we encounter.

Please note that Governors expect parents to value their child's education and to support school policy unequivocally and therefore to avoid taking their child out of school for all but absolutely essential reasons.

A copy of the full Attendance Policy is available to view on the school's website:

[www.waddesdonschool.com](http://www.waddesdonschool.com). Alternatively, a hard copy can be provided on request to the school.

## **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND THE LAW**

By law (Education Act 1996) parents are responsible for making sure that children of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years) receive a suitable full-time education. Failure to attend school on a regular full-time basis may result in legal action being taken against parents.

At Waddesdon School we give good attendance and punctuality a high priority and students registered with us are required to attend school regularly, be punctual at all times and attend lessons. To ensure the maximum possible attendance and punctuality of every student we will:

- Identify promptly patterns of non-attendance and inform parents immediately of any unauthorised absence
- Reduce truancy by working in close partnership with the Education Welfare Service, Police and Police Community Support Officers, to identify areas where students are known to truant and operate truancy sweeps to return these students to school
- Recognise the external factors which impact on student attendance, and work in partnership with parents and the Education Welfare Service to address difficulties.

We hope that you will support our efforts to improve the achievement and learning of your child by:

- Ensuring that the school is notified of any absence by telephone and that this is confirmed in writing when your son/daughter returns
- Informing the school immediately if your child is unwell or unable to attend for any reason
- Encouraging your child to arrive on time and prepared for learning
- Supporting the use of school detentions as a punishment for truancy and lateness, by ensuring your child attends.

If you have any concerns regarding your child's current attendance and are aware of circumstances that may be impacting on their attendance, please contact Mr Sturla at school to discuss the issues.

## **EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE**

In the event of persistent non-attendance, the school works closely with the Education Welfare Service to remove any barriers which may be preventing a student from fully accessing the education to which he/she is entitled.

As required in the amendments to the 2007 Regulations, the Education Welfare Service can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised absence. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned and for each child's absence. These notices will require parents to pay a set fine within a given number of days. If unauthorised leave is repeated, the Education Welfare Service may summons each parent to court.

## WADDESDON CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

### Application for Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances

**Please note: 'Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances'.**

***Parents who do take their children on holiday during term time without prior authorisation by the school may be fined under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act***

I request permission from Waddesdon School's Governing Body for my child to be granted Leave of Absence for the dates and reasons given below.

**Student's name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Form:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Please note, a separate form must be completed for each child in the family)

**Proposed dates of absence:**

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_ **To:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please give details and reasons for the proposed absence:**

(continue overleaf if necessary)

The completed form should be submitted to the Headteacher not less than one month before the proposed period of absence. Parents are strongly advised to discuss the application with the form tutor before submission.

The Governing Body will carefully consider your request and may take your child's attendance record into account. If permission is refused, any absence for the above period will be recorded at the end of the school year as unauthorised absence.

Permission will not be granted for leave of absence immediately prior to or during assessment or examination periods. In any case, your school will not normally agree to your child missing more than ten school days for family holidays in any one school year.

***Having a good education will help to give your child the best possible start in life. If your child is absent for any period, he or she may miss essential elements of their learning programme.***

**Signature of Parent / Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please print name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST – RESPONSE FORM

Leave of absence from: \_\_\_\_\_ to: \_\_\_\_\_ For (Pupil's name) \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your request for leave of absence. Unfortunately this has been refused because:

**OR:** This absence request has been authorised



**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason for absence – continuation:**