

HOLIDAY POLICY - SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

The Blackpool Family of Catholic Schools Policy on Term Time Absence

Introduction

The members of the Blackpool Family of Catholic Schools have always believed that very high levels of attendance at school are important if children/students are to achieve well and be successful in their education. Children's/students' absences during term time should, therefore, be kept to an absolute minimum.

The following policy statement has been produced in response to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which came into force on 1 September 2013.

Key Changes

The previous Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time, in "special circumstances", of up to ten school days per year. Headteachers were also able to grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as to the statutory threshold of ten school days.

The new amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child may be away from school if the leave is granted.

Please note these regulations do not cover sickness absence.

The Blackpool Family of Catholic Schools

The Blackpool Family of Catholic Schools has worked together to write this policy statement in order to determine a consistent application of these new regulations and help provide clarity for families. This new policy is significantly different from policies operated in some Blackpool Catholic schools previously and is derived from the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Term Time Holidays

Following the amendments to the School Attendance Regulations no holidays during term time will be authorised.

Other Leave

The following list of "exceptional circumstances" has been produced to illustrate the types of reason where a headteacher may grant leave of absence during term time. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list but indicative of the type of circumstances where leave will be granted to a child/student:

- a. Death of close relative
- b. Funeral of close relative
- c. Wedding of a close relative
- d. House Move

- e. Degree Ceremonies of a close relative
- f. Religious Observance of a major feast

Where one of these circumstances applies, the headteacher may grant one day's leave of absence or, when appropriate – for example in the case of the death or funeral of a close relative– more than one consecutive day. Version 1.2 1st October 2013

For the purposes of this guidance the definition of a close relative/immediate family is defined as a child's:

- a. Father, mother, step-father or step-mother
- b. Brother, sister, half brother, half sister, step brother or step sister
- c. Grandparent, uncle or auntie

Medical or Dental Appointments

It is expected that all routine (non-emergency) medical, dental or ophthalmic checks will be scheduled either after normal school hours or during the school holidays. This also applies as far as possible to elective minor surgery. It is recognised, however that this is not always possible.

If it is not possible for a parent/student to arrange an appointment outside of the school day, the parent/student should endeavour to arrange for the appointment at a time that will cause the least disruption to the child's education, for example at the beginning or end of the school day.

The school will require the parent to either write a letter or produce an appointment card for each absence.

Fines & Court Action

Whilst the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 allow for schools to fine parents who do not ensure their child(ren) attend school as required by these regulations, for example by taking a term time holiday, the Blackpool Family of Catholic Schools has determined that this would not be compatible with the close relationship it values with parents. As a consequence parents will not be fined for breaching these regulations.

However, where a child(ren)'s attendance falls below an acceptable level the school may initiate court proceedings to protect the child(ren)'s education. Attendance below 85% is termed persistent absence and the names of children with attendance below 85% is collected regularly through the academic year and sent, as part of the data collection process, to the Department for Education.