



## ***Exmouth Area Learning Community***

Dear Parent

### **Requests for authorisation of pupil absence from school during term time.**

You will already know that the Government and the Local Authority (LA) have established that the good attendance of all pupils in our schools is a high priority. This is because high attendance and success at school go hand in hand.

The law does not give parents the right to take their child out of school for an authorised absence from school. However, if families request authorisation before a pupil is absent, then headteachers may authorise the absence for the pupil if certain conditions apply. Only headteachers, and under certain circumstances the school's Governing Body, are able to decide if an absence is to be authorised.

As members of the Exmouth Area Learning Community (EALC) we want to be as fair and consistent as possible when considering requests for a pupil's absence during term time. Therefore all schools in the EALC have agreed to follow the same approach to requests for holidays in term time. In making the decision to authorise or not authorise the request the headteachers in EALC schools will consider carefully the following questions.

- What is the length and what is the purpose of the proposed absence?
- What will be the effect of the timing of the absence on the child's education? (e.g. the beginning of a school year or new school term or the period before tests or exams)
- Are there any specific issues arising from the age of the child and what National Curriculum year group the pupil is in? (e.g. not yet of a statutory age)
- Is the absence providing an opportunity for the pupil to take part in an educational activity? (e.g. county or national sporting event)
- Will the absence mean that the pupil will miss an important educational experience at school? (e.g. transition from primary to secondary school activity or educational visit)
- Have any holidays already been taken in the school year? (N.B. only one holiday may be authorised in any academic year even if it involves an absence of just one session)
- What will be the likely impact on the child's ability to catch up with the work missed?
- Does the absence help to meet the child's educational or welfare needs?
- What is the child's general absence/attendance record? (N.B. pupils are expected to achieve at least 95% attendance throughout an academic year)
- Are there any compassionate reasons that support the request for absence? (e.g. a significant event involving a close member of the family such as a wedding or funeral)
- Has the child been excluded during the course of the year?

In making the decision to authorise or not authorise the request, on the basis of 'exceptional circumstances' for absences during a school year, the Headteacher will consider carefully the following and may need to consult with the school Governing Body:

- Forces Personnel who are either about to embark on or are on leave from a foreign posting.
- Parents who have significant employment restrictions (the school may ask for evidence from the employer).
- Other significant family circumstances. (N.B. Heads are not permitted to authorise absences for annual holidays for reasons of cost and if the holiday is a gift, prize or special offer then all questions above must apply).

p.t.o.

## Examples of when absences might be authorised or not.

<b>Authorised absence would normally be granted for the following reasons:</b>	<b>Authorised absence would not normally be granted for the following reasons:</b>
Subject to the answers to the questions and the conditions on the application form S2 being met (including meeting attendance target) an annual holiday for up to 10 working days – see flowchart.	Annual means only one application may be granted in any one year even if only one half day has already been taken as the authorised annual holiday. It is not possible to authorise any split holiday dates e.g. two separate weeks.
Exceptional holiday. This is in addition to the annual holiday and only in very unusual circumstances – this must have the authorisation of the school Governing Body. e.g. only possible time for contact with an estranged parent or a parent on unexpected service leave.	Media holidays where forward planning of dates is not possible due to the nature of the offer.
Following a good record of attendance and if there is prior consultation with the school, some one-off requests for “family together” activities that can be deemed a “significant celebration or event” involving immediate family. e.g. Weddings involving close family members, Special anniversaries, Grandparent’s 80 <sup>th</sup> Birthday. There needs to be a clear social justification in this case as in looked after pupils. Refer. LA publications and use appropriate application form.	Requests for absence during dates important in the school calendar and previously notified to parents and carers. e.g. Christmas, Shows, Sports Days, SATs, Residential Visits, September/May or revision periods for examinations. Non-significant celebrations including “normal” birthdays. Appointments that can be made outside of normal school sessions such as wedding costume fittings or rehearsals etc. Visiting relatives when there are no exceptional reasons.
Medical appointments that can not be made at a time when the school is not in session. (e.g. during school holidays)	Shopping trips, personal appointments. e.g. hairdresser
Community events. e.g. Parades, Services, Armed Forces activities.	When a request for authorisation has not been received by the school before the absence occurs. (N.B. To avoid additional costs or disappointment, please do not book a holiday in term time before getting authorisation from the school)
Educational visits that will enhance or extend the learning taking place in school.	Holiday visits to Theme or Amusement Parks.
Recognised examinations. e.g. Music, Ballet.	
Representative Sports and Concerts	
Religious Observances	

As headteachers in the EALC, we are very happy to discuss any plans you may have that involve your child to be absent from school during term time. Please feel free to contact the school to discuss your situation before making a request.

On behalf of the EALC schools:

Bassett’s Farm Primary; The Beacon CoE Primary; Brixington Primary;  
 Drake’s CoE Primary, East Budleigh; Exeter Road Primary; Littleham CoE Primary;  
 Lymstone CoE Primary; Marpool Primary; Otterton CoE Primary; St Peter’s CoE Primary,  
 BudleighSalterton; St Joseph’s RC Primary; Withycombe Raleigh CoE Primary;  
 Woodbury CoE Primary; Woodbury Salterton CoE Primary and Exmouth Community College.