

8<sup>th</sup> July 2019

**Re: BCPS & WCPS Term Time Absences Reminder**

Dear Parents,

I am writing to remind you of our policy regarding term time absences. Please read this information in conjunction with the letter about morning registration and late arrivals.

If you wish to take your child out of school for any reason, you need to complete an Exceptional Circumstances Absence Request Form. This is for any and all absences where you believe there are exceptional circumstances that would apply. This would, for example, include medical appointments that cannot be taken outside of school hours. Please provide as much advanced notice of the absence as you can – **a minimum of 3 school weeks** is required. There are a growing number of parents who are making bookings such as travel arrangements and submitting an Exceptional Circumstances Absence Request Form with very little notice, on the basis that this would leave the school little choice but to authorise the absence. Also, please provide as much detail about the absence as possible, including an explanation of why the absence from school is necessary. Please read the guidance notes on the back of the absence form. We may require copies of documents that would support your rationale for this absence request being exceptional.

Routine dental and medical appointments should be organised and taken outside of the school day. Where this is not possible a copy of the appointment card or letter should be provided. Too many appointments are often taken during the school day which causes disruption to class teaching and other activities that we try and organise as a school.

For other absences please note that, unless there are exceptional circumstances for requesting a term time absence, this will not be authorised. Any discretion I once had as a headteacher to authorise term time absence, was removed several years ago. This could include a request to celebrate a birthday or to go on holiday as it's cheaper outside of the main school holidays. These are not considered exceptional reasons for requesting an absence.

In the event that your absence is unauthorised you will be notified of this.

As a school we monitor the level of unauthorised absence and, where this is of a level of concern, it is reported to the Local Authority who will determine whether further action is needed. This includes instances where children arrive at school late or are taken out of school early. Please note the school gates open at 8.30am and school officially begins at 9am. Registration is called between 9am and 9.10am. If your child arrives during registration they will be marked as arriving late. If your child arrives after the registration period has ended, your child will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

A copy of the Exceptional Circumstances Absence Request Form is attached to this letter. This reflects the latest information from the Local Authority regarding term time absences. Please use this form

when you have a request to make. This form can also be obtained from the school main reception or downloaded from the Policies and Forms area on the home page of the schools' websites.

Please note the details outlined on the form about the fines and possible court action that may be taken should there be unauthorised absence. Where in the past people may have taken a holiday during term time and been willing to pay the fine, deeming it as cheaper than a holiday taken during the school holiday periods, we are now in a position where some families are going to be taken to court where this has happened for a second time in a subsequent year. I would strongly advise that parents do not see the cost of the fine as a cheaper solution and therefore justifiable for taking a term time absence.

I have noted a trend of applications in recent months where holidays are being taken in term time due to work pressures and, whilst I may have a sympathy, this has become unmanageable and there are thirteen weeks of school holiday where holidays can be taken even if you are unable to take it during the long six week summer period.

I understand that this causes a mixture of reactions among parents, however, I hope you fully appreciate these are government requirements and outside of my control.

Should you require any further information, please email [admin@tcat.education](mailto:admin@tcat.education)

Yours sincerely,



**Jonathan Bishop**  
Executive Headteacher