



www.swanlandeducationtrust.co.uk

Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is, however, a discretionary power held by Head Teachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Please note this is **not an entitlement**. The Head Teacher will only authorise absence in line with the School's 'Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances' Policy. Head Teachers will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education.

Please note that supporting documents to aid decision making must be submitted at the time of your request for absence.

If your request is authorised, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed school work. This is your responsibility and school are not obliged to provide work for your child to complete. **The Head Teacher will not authorise any more than 10 sessions (5 school days) in any one academic year.**

Any unauthorised absence will be recorded on your child's attendance records. This may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

Penalty Notices

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the local authority and schools have statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the Head Teacher has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent. If your child **accrues 10 sessions** of unauthorised absence you may be liable for a penalty notice (one days absence equals two sessions and a five day absence is equal to 10 sessions etc.)

Penalty Notices may be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post direct to the home of a parent after possibly just one warning, or in the case of absences without acceptable cause, warnings may not be given. This includes pupils caught on truancy sweeps, persistent late arrival after the close of registration or **unauthorised absence that has not been authorised as an absence from school for exceptional circumstances**. In these cases the warning is given on the absence request form and detailed within this information leaflet and no written warning will be given. Fines are issued for unauthorised absence of 5 or more days and each school day is divided into 2 registration periods. **For example if your child is absent for one day this equals 2 sessions and a five day absence is equal to 10 sessions.**

If your request is declined and you still take your child out of school each parent within your household may be issued with a **£60** penalty notice for each child you have taken out of school. If a penalty notice remains unpaid after **21 days** it will increase to **£120**. If after **28 days** it remains unpaid you may be summonsed to appear before **Magistrates** to explain why your child has unauthorised school absences and you may be liable for a fine of up to **£1000**.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this, or if you need help to achieve an improvement, please contact your child's school to discuss this.

We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement from their school first. Head Teachers cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance.