

Dear Parents/Carers,

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The Department for Education allows a Headteacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time only in “exceptional circumstances” as any absence from school will disrupt your child’s learning.

Under new Government legislation, which came into force in August 2024, a family holiday for leisure or recreation is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

You need to request a leave of absence by completing the attached Exceptional Circumstances Absence Request form. If the absence is not considered an exceptional circumstance and you take your child out of school for the leave of absence, this **will be recorded as unauthorised**.

Should you still choose to take your child out of school unauthorised, the school must inform the Local Authority Attendance Team. If you have parental responsibility, this could mean receiving any of the following:

- A penalty notice - **The first penalty notice** issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. **A second penalty notice** issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then court proceedings will be initiated
- If a previous penalty notice has been issued the Local Authority may decide to proceed directly to prosecution.

Please Note: The threshold for the Local Authority considering issuing a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be met by any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in 1 week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.

All leave of absence requests must be completed on the attached form, letters will not be accepted. This should be returned to the school **at least 7 days** before the start of the absence. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken; leave of absence cannot be authorised retrospectively.

In considering the decision whether to authorise, the following will be taken into account:

- Your child’s previous attendance record: this includes attendance in the current academic year, as well as attendance in previous academic years.
- Whether your child will miss any tests/examinations (or important preparation for their tests)
- Whether your child is making good progress.

I hope you will support our efforts to raise attendance and attainment at our school.

Yours faithfully,



Tom Hailwood
Headteacher

Cumbria Futures Federation
Exceptional Circumstances Absence Request Form

School: Beacon Hill / Solway Community School (*please select relevant school*)

Student Name

Year

Date of first day of absence __ / __ / 20 __ am/pm Last day of absence __ / __ / 20 __ am/pm

Number of school days that your child will be absent from school _____

Please detail the exceptional circumstance for which you are requesting leave of absence and why this absence isn't able to be taken during school holidays.

I/We understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the school must inform the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

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Name(s) of Parent/Carer(s) making application

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms Forename.....

Surname

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms Forename.....

Surname

Signed

Dated __ / __ / 20 __

(Please ensure you are giving at least 7 days' notice of the proposed absence; retrospective applications cannot be authorised).

School use only		
Date form received	No of school days absence requested	% Attendance
Exceptional Circumstances criteria met		YES/NO

Absence authorised Code _____
 Absence unauthorised
 Signed _____
 Headteacher