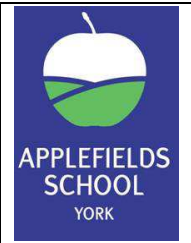


# APPLEFIELDS SCHOOL

## PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY



### Introduction

Schools are required to provide education for 190 days per year and it is expected that children who are registered at a school will attend for all this time. Parents do not have an automatic right for their children to have authorised absence when they request it for holidays in term time or for any other reason.

The Secretary of State for Education has revised the guidance regarding parental requests for children to take leave of absence or holidays from school during term time. The revised guidance states that from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 Headteachers will be expected to refuse all requests for leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been changed to remove any reference to Headteachers being able to authorise up to ten days leave of absence for family holidays.

Any reference in this document to 'parents' includes carers or any adult(s) that have legal responsibility for the child.

### Policy

Regular attendance at school is important to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning and to ensure that students benefit from the provision available at school. We actively discourage parents from arranging holidays during term time and the Headteacher will only authorise absence for such holidays in exceptional circumstances.

This means that:

- parents can not expect that leave of absence will be granted as an automatic right,
- all requests will be considered on their individual merits,
- leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances,
- the Headteacher retains the right to approve or refuse leave of absence requests.

A pupil may be granted leave of absence where:

- an application has been made in advance to the Headteacher by a parent using the correct form.
- the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances of the request.

In the context of this policy, exceptional circumstances might include:

- as a result of the child's complex special educational needs which mean that to take a holiday during the busier times of the year would cause the child significant distress,
- a parent or grandparent is seriously or terminally ill and the proposed holiday is likely to be the last such holiday,

- there has been a recent death or other significant trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation,
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis,
- where the child's parents are service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time and provided that the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education,
- where the child is taking part in a holiday which is provided by a charity and this provides much needed respite support to the family,
- any other circumstances that the Headteacher considers to be exceptional.

It is expected that requests for leave of absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

When the request is as a result of:

- the availability of cheap holidays,
- the availability of desired accommodation (unless this is specifically related to the child's special educational needs),
- poor weather experienced in the school holiday,
- holidays or visits that could be reasonably be expected to be taken during school closures,
- holidays that overlap with the beginning or end of a term,
- other circumstances which the head teacher does not considers to be exceptional.

#### Requesting Leave of Absence

All requests for leave of absence must be submitted on the appropriate form which is available from the school office. It is recognised that in some circumstances the exceptional nature of the request will prevent a reasonable amount of notice being provided, however, it is expected that all requests will be made as soon as practically possible before any leave of absence is taken.

Parents will be informed of the outcome of their request as soon as practically possible.

#### Unauthorised Absence

In circumstances where a request is not approved and parents take their child out of school, this will be counted as an unauthorised absence. In these circumstances the matter will be referred to the local authority who may consider the issuing of a Fixed Penalty notice or start prosecution proceedings.