



Lode Heath School

Lode Lane, Solihull,
B91 2HW
0121 704 1421

www.lodeheath.org.uk

ASSOCIATE HEADTEACHER:
MS LSUDDON

November 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Please find attached correspondence from Solihull MBC which highlights the legalities of taking unauthorised leave during term time. Lode Heath School will be adopting and following this new Code of Conduct.

Therefore I need to make you aware that for requests of **leave of absence during term time**, the new code of conduct stipulates that in the event of 5 days of unauthorised absence being accrued (whether it be consecutive or non-consecutive days), the school is obliged to follow its statutory duty to report this to the local authority who will then pursue the option of issuing a Penalty Notice (fine) to the Parent/Guardian. It is important to note that each parent can be fined up to £120 per child. If a Parent/Guardian considers they require their child to have a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances they should complete the absence request form which can be obtained from the school office at least two weeks prior to the date required. There is a requirement that the Parent/Guardian provides evidence of the exceptional circumstances.

Lode Heath School strives to have a whole school attendance of 100% as all of the research published indicates that absence from school has a significant negative impact on achievement. It is a Parent/Guardian's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis and to provide an explanation of any absence. If school have not received a call, a letter or note in your child's planner explaining why your child was absent then this will be treated as an unauthorised absence. If you report your child absent for reasons considered valid (e.g. illness, medical/dental appointment), but we have reason to believe your child is absent due to holiday for example, then this will be recorded as unauthorised.

I would also like to draw to your attention that The Department for Education (DfE) have changed the level of a pupil with persistent absenteeism from 85% to 90%. This means that if your child's attendance falls below 90% school are obliged to involve the support of our Education Welfare Officer. Failure to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence, absences can only be authorised by the Headteacher, within boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

I look forward to receiving your support with regard to these changes.

Yours sincerely

Ms L Suddon
Headteacher

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PASSAGE FROM SOLIHULL'S CODE OF CONDUCT REGARDING EACH PARENT BEING ISSUED A SEPARATE PENALTY NOTICE

Sub section 1 of Solihull's code of conduct

1. In cases of absence from school, or a place of alternative educational provision, when the pupil has been taken on a "leave of absence" in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school (education provider), and the school have followed the Local Authority policy.

In such cases **each parent** will receive a **separate penalty notice** for **each child** taken out of school.

DEFINITION OF A PARENT :
SECTION 576 EDUCATION ACT 1996 :

All parents who fall within the definition set out in the Education Act 1996 are defined as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although they are not a natural parent has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person – having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child is considered to be a parent in education law.

Throughout this document, references to "parent" mean **each and every** parent coming within the definition, whether acting jointly or separately, and should not be taken to mean that provisions only apply to "parent" in the singular.



CHILDRENS SERVICES AND SKILLS

Education Welfare Service

Elmwood Place, 37 Burtons Way,

Birmingham, B36 0UG

Tel. 0121-779 1737

Email: jsierzega@solihull.gov.uk

www.solihull.gov.uk

Please ask for: Jo Sierzega

Date 08 July 2015

To:
Parent / Carer

Dear Parent / Carer

Re: The law in relation to school attendance

I am writing to remind you of the national legislation passed in 2013 in relation to requests to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. From September 2013, it became unlawful for pupils to be granted holiday from school during term time and as such head teachers are unable to give permission.

In very rare circumstances, head teachers can consider requests made by parents in advance for a Leave of Absence from school in circumstances, which would not usually include holidays. Should you believe your request would fall into this very rare category of Exceptional Circumstances you will need to make a request for Leave of Absence in writing directly to the head teacher.

I am aware that this information will not be relevant to all of you as the vast majority of our young people have very good attendance at school, supported by parents and carers. However, this is not the case for every child and I remain concerned at the high level of learning days missed in Solihull due to term time holidays. Recent research published in February 2015 found that absence from school has a negative impact on attainment: "...pupils with no absence are 1.5 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C or equivalent and 2.8 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C or equivalent including English and Maths". Please work with us and your child's school to lower absence and raise your child's potential attainment.

As you should be aware, parents and carers can be fined up to £120 per parent, per child for taking holidays in term time. A full copy of the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct for Solihull is available online at http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Schools/20and%20learning/Leave_of_Absence_Requests.pdf

Yours sincerely

Sally Hodges
Director for Children's Services & Skills

