



Dear Parents/Carers,

At St Martin and St Mary School, we have always endeavoured to be as reasonable as possible where occasional, one-off term time absences are concerned, but as you are aware since the 19th August 2024, there has been a change to the legislation regarding absences during term time for those in statutory education and this has affected our ability to authorise them. The Department for Education allows a Head Teacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time, only in 'exceptional circumstances'.

In all cases, parents need to request a leave of absence by completing the form on the reverse of this letter. If the absence is not considered to be an 'exceptional circumstance', and you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence this will be recorded as unauthorised.

Failing to ensure regular school attendance by taking your child out of school in term time for a holiday is an offence under section 444 (1) or section 444 (1A) of the 1996 Education act. The maximum penalty for these offences is a fine of £2,500, three months' imprisonment, or both. Alternatively, the local authority/school may choose to impose a Section 444A Penalty Notice in the order of a fine instead of prosecuting for the offences given above. The amount of the penalty notice is £160 (per parent, per child). There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in prosecution, except in limited circumstances.

In addition, where a child's attendance is causing a concern, and is set to fall below 90% in any given period, school will refer the family to the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion Officer for further support and intervention.

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 holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

We'd advise before booking any holiday that you read the Local Authorities Code of Conduct for penalty notice.

[Code of Conduct for penalty notices \(PDF , 216KB\)](#)

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

- Reasons given for the absence
- Any absence taken in previous academic years (authorised or unauthorised)
- Your child's previous attendance record; this includes attendance in the current academic year - which should be over 96% - 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 sincerely,

Louise Swindlehurst – Headteacher

**Parent Request for Leave of Absence during Term Time**

<b>Pupil Name</b>		<b>Class</b>	
<b>Date of first day of absence</b>		<b>Date of return to school</b>	
<b>Number of school days that your child will be absent from school</b>			
<b>Please detail the exceptional circumstance for which you are requesting leave of absence:</b>			

I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the Local Authority may be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice may be issued. All unauthorised absences, including holidays that have not been sanctioned by the headteacher, are accumulated and parents who fail to ensure regular attendance of their children at school can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 444A of the Education Act 1996. The amount is £80 (per parent per child) if paid within 21 days and £160 (per parent per child) if paid between 21 and 28 days. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in prosecution, except in limited circumstances.

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

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

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

Signed .....

Date .....

Please ensure you are giving at least 7 days' notice of the proposed absence. Retrospective applications cannot be authorised. Result of request will be notified in a letter from the headteacher.

For school to complete:            AUTHORISED            UNAUTHORISED

Headteacher's signature..... Date