



High Beech Church of England Primary School

Mott Street, Loughton, Essex IG10 4AP
Telephone: 020 8508 6048 Fax: 020 8532 0161



Epping Forest Schools
Partnership Trust

10th June 2019

Leave of Absence for your child

Dear Parents,

I would like to thank the majority of parents who support the school in ensuring that their child attends school whenever possible. However, there is an issue regarding some parents who are illegally taking their children out of school during term time.

The Governing Body of High Beech met last week and one of the items on the agenda was the attendance policy. Essex has produced an updated version of the attendance policy which has clarified a number of points and the governing body has agreed to adopt it. I have highlighted a few of the key points below.

- **There is no longer any entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday.**
- **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" irrespective of the child's overall attendance.**
- **'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:**
 - ... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the headteacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.
- **We will not consider applications for leave during term time:**
 - **at any time in September.** This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class as quickly as possible.
 - during **assessment and test periods** in the school's calendar affecting your child.
 - when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

I would like to reiterate that **Penalty Notices may be issued by Essex County Council where there have been at least 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday.** (one session is equivalent to half a day)

Also due to the importance of pupils settling into school at the commencement of the school year, Penalty Notices may also be issued if there have been at **least 6 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence during the first two weeks of September** due to a term-time holiday.

For your guidance, please see the attached list of dates for next year showing when important assessment and test periods are for your child and also the term dates for the academic year 2019/20, including INSET days.

If you would like any further information regarding attendance, you may visit our website where you can find the full version of the attendance policy.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Roffey (Headteacher)

