



1. INTRODUCTION

All parents/carers who have children of compulsory school age are responsible in law for ensuring that their children receive an efficient education, “suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs which they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise” (Section 7 Education Act 1996).

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To promote regular school attendance in order for every child to reach their full educational potential.
- To provide an effective monitoring system to safeguard children’s welfare.
- To promote an effective dialogue between school, parent/carers and outside agencies.
- To set in place systems for registration and attendance in order to protect children both inside school and out.
- To provide guidelines on sensitive approaches to deal with the needs of individual pupils; to agree procedures for a child’s return to school, including re-integrating long-term absentees.
- To work with parent/carers and also to be a supporter of family life.

3. PUNCTUALITY

The school day starts at 8:50am. However in order to facilitate a prompt start to the day the school doors are opened at 8:40am. All teachers are on duty in the classrooms at this time. Teaching Assistants support pupils to self register over this ten minute window. Between 8:50 and 8:55 the doors are secured. Anyone arriving after this time must report to the front desk to register.

The register will be kept open until 9.30 a.m. Children arriving during this period will be marked as late and should be signed in by a parent/carer. Pupils arriving after 9.30 a.m. will be marked unauthorised absence. The afternoon session begins at 1.15 p.m. and the register is called immediately. Pupils arriving between 1.15 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. will be marked as late. Any pupil arriving after the close of register at 1.30 p.m. will be marked as unauthorised absence. Patterns of late attendance or unauthorised absence will be investigated and may need to be referred to the school’s E.W.O. as there may be grounds for concern. In extreme cases, prosecution of parent/carers may ensue.



4. ATTENDANCE CODES

/	present
B	Educated off site
C	Other Circumstances (authorised)
D	Dual Registration
E	Excluded
F	Extended Family Holiday (agreed)
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)
H	Family Holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before register closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointment
N	No reason yet
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Agreed Sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after register closed)
V	Educational visit/trip
W	Work experience
X	Non comp. School
Y	School Closure

5. FIXED PENALTY NOTICE INFORMATION & UNATHORISED ABSENCE

The Local Authority has brought to the attention of every school in East Riding of Yorkshire the new powers in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to tackle poor school attendance.

These came into force from the 27th February 2004 and include Penalty Notices, which mean that for pupils with unauthorised absence from school (i.e. any absences that the school has not given permission for) their parents/carers may be subject to a prompt fine of either £50 or £100. These can be levied per pupil, per parent, per week of absence. A week can be accumulative over a school year.

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absence developing. They will be issued simply by post to a pupil's home.

Cases of absence without acceptable cause will also include:

- pupils caught on truancy sweeps
- **unauthorised holiday in school term time** and



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- persistent late attendance after the register has closed.

It means that any parent/carer of a pupil with a level of unauthorised absence may now have a potential liability in the form of a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority.

Parent/Carers have also been made aware of changes to the school's policy on holidays in term time.

Parents/carers may request up to 10 days absence from school from the Head Teacher. This will however only be granted if the request meets one of the following criteria:

- Parent's contractual conditions make it impossible to take a holiday in the school holidays. (a letter from the employer must accompany this application)
- Child or parent's rehabilitation of medical/emotional issues (a letter from the GP must accompany this application)
- Emigration investigation. (documentary evidence must be supplied)
- Family wedding, funeral or major family celebration out of the area (documentary evidence must be supplied)

Parent/Carers are encouraged to work with the school to reduce the number of term time holidays. Whereas attendance at Molescroft Primary School is excellent any absence from school cannot be caught up. The time is lost.

Parent/carers are urged to submit a holiday form **before** booking a holiday, if the possibility of unauthorised absence is to be avoided and indeed a fine.

The school does however wish to work with parent/carers and also to be a supporter of family life.

6. EXAMPLES OF ABSENCE WHICH CAN BE AUTHORISED

Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence. Absence should be authorised if:-

- The pupil is absent with leave.
- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carers belong.
- The school at which the pupil is registered is not within walking distance of their home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the L.A. for the pupil's transport to and from school.
- The pupil is the child of traveller parent/carers who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.
- There is a family bereavement.
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has given leave of absence.
- The pupil is attending an interview for a place at another school.
- The pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion e.g. a family wedding.



- Leave of absence is granted (according to the criteria above) by the Headteacher for a family holiday of no more than 10 school days. Parent/carers should be reminded that they cannot expect, as of right that the Headteacher will agree to a family holiday during term time.

7. FURTHER EXAMPLES OF UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

- No explanation is forthcoming from the parent/carer.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is staying at home to mind the house or look after siblings.
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions e.g. the pupil's birthday.
- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday for a period of time longer than that negotiated with the Headteacher and does not return when agreed unless due to unavoidable circumstances.
- The pupil is on a family holiday without permission or if the parent/carers have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and, instead, seek retrospective approval on their return.

Parent/carers should inform the school of a child's absence as early as possible each day the child does not attend. Where no notification is received by 9.30 a.m. for the morning session or 1.30 p.m. for the afternoon session, the school will endeavour to contact parent/carers to ascertain that the child is safe.

8. EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE AUTHORITY POLICY *and the implementation and interpretation of this Policy by Molescroft Primary School*

Term Time Holidays Policy and Procedures

Introduction

The policy outlined below has been agreed by both the primary and secondary school behaviour and attendance partnerships in the East Riding of Yorkshire and is aimed at supporting schools in managing requests from parents for term time holidays. It is intended to make this process clearer and more consistent. This policy is linked with the penalty notice code of conduct that all head teachers and the local authority have agreed to work within.

Background

Schools are required to provide education for 180 days a year and it is expected that children who are registered at a school will attend for this time. Parents do not have an automatic right for their children to have time off school to go on a holiday; this is entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

In 2007-08, 14 per cent of absence from schools nationally was a result of family holidays, however in the East Riding of Yorkshire this figure was nearly 21 per cent, one of the highest in the country. In 2008-09 this trend continued.



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Research shows that children achieve less the more school absence they have. A child absent from school for two weeks each year means that the child misses the equivalent of two terms of education over their school life.

In 2007 only 36 per cent of pupils with more than 12 days absence in secondary schools got 5 GCSEs, compared to 91 per cent of pupils with an average of 6 days absence.

Only 52 per cent of primary school pupils with 12 or more days absence achieved level 4 or above in English and Mathematics compared to 84 per cent of pupils where absence was less than 6 days.

This is compelling evidence for us to strive to reduce the number of school days missed due to term time holidays.

Some head teachers have been reluctant to unauthorise term time holidays for three reasons:

1. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) have monitored unauthorised absence and tasked local authorities and schools to reduce this.
2. Refusing term time holidays was considered to have a detrimental effect on a school's relationship with families.
3. There was little support for schools when parents decided to take their children out of school without authorisation.

The situation has changed and there are a number of reasons why it is no longer appropriate for head teachers to continue to authorise holidays as they have in the past.

- The DCSF are no longer monitoring authorised or unauthorised absence, they are now focusing on overall absence and therefore all absences need to be reduced.
- The establishment of the primary and secondary behaviour attendance partnerships provides an opportunity for an East Riding wide cross phase agreement which would support head teachers when discussing their decision with families.
- The East Riding of Yorkshire Council has adopted the term time policy and now has a more streamlined procedure for penalty notices which would support head teachers where they do not authorise term time holidays.

General Principles

The following general principles underpin this policy:



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- (i) The principles of honesty, openness, transparency and the spirit of co-operation underpin the proposals.
- (ii) All schools within the East Riding agree to follow the policies through to penalty notice if appropriate. This will ensure that the policy is applied in a consistent manner and provides equity for all parents and schools.
- (iii) Support of this policy from the local authority will be as a partner in both the primary and secondary behaviour and attendance partnerships. The inclusion and access services of the Council will ensure other local authority departments are aware of and include the philosophy of this policy in their practice.
- (iv) Where a holiday absence request form is not submitted, absences will not be authorised retrospectively. In these circumstances the penalty notice code of conduct must be followed.
- (v) Data from each individual school in relation to term time holidays will be monitored by the local authority and shared with schools and the partnerships. This will allow the partnerships to assess the impact of this policy.
- (vi) The behaviour and attendance partnerships will review this policy annually.

Policy

Requests for term time holidays will normally only be considered in the following circumstances-

1. Where a parent has to take holidays at a time specified by their employer. This would include parents who work in certain professions, for example farmers, factory workers, fire fighters. Head teachers will use their knowledge of families to manage requests made by self employed parents.
2. Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
3. Where parents are considering emigration and wish to visit the country as part of their consideration.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a close member of the family that is taking place out of the area. *(At Molescroft this is extended to include all significant family events out of the area. This would include for example a Grandparent's 75th birthday or a Golden wedding anniversary, but not a cousin's 5th birthday party)*

Evidence would be required in each case.



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The partnerships have agreed that holidays will not, **under any circumstances** (including those listed above) be authorised at the following times-

1. The first six weeks of any academic year (applies to all pupils). (*This is strongly discouraged at Molescroft, but if a parent can prove that there is absolutely no alternative due to contractual arrangements and it is not the beginning of the Foundation Year, the Head Teacher may use his discretion to sanction an absence*)
2. Year six transition day (for pupils in year six). (*At Molescroft Primary School this would be allowed if alternative arrangements can be made.*)
3. Year six SATs week (for pupils in year six).
4. Year nine options time (for pupils in year nine).
5. At any time during years 10 & 11 (for all pupils in these year groups).
6. At any time specified by the school (this will be communicated to parents by each school).

Publicity and Awareness Raising

The local authority will publicise the cross phase agreement to parents through the media and the publication of leaflets.

Schools will produce leaflets and include information in newsletters etc, as agreed by the partnership.

Procedures

Schools will retain a supply of term time holiday absence request forms and give to parents as required. The policy, information on term time holidays and request forms will also be available on the Council's website.

Parents must return the form to the Headteacher or to the senior member of school staff that the Headteacher has delegated this decision making to.

If siblings or other children living in the same household (of compulsory school age) are known and identified on the holiday request form and attend an East Riding of Yorkshire school, the head teachers from both schools must reach a joint decision regarding the parent's request within five school days of receiving the holiday request form. This will ensure an East Riding of Yorkshire wide consistent approach.

The Headteacher will decide if the request should be authorised or unauthorised using the 'Term Time Holiday Decision Making Flowchart' and the principles within this policy.



Holiday absences taken during term time will be marked-

- 'F' if it is an authorised absence for an extended family holiday.
- 'G' if it is an unauthorised absence for a family holiday, or sessions in excess of agreement.
- 'H' if it is an authorised absence for a family holiday

Authorised Holiday Requests

The Headteacher must write to the parent who has made the request, informing them of the decision, the date of the child's last school day before the holiday and the date the school expect the child to return to school. Within the letter it should be clear how the absence will be marked on the child's attendance certificate. The letter should also make clear that no more absence due to term time holidays will be authorised during the same academic year. A copy of the letter should be sent to any parent who does not have day to day care and responsibility of the child but does have parental responsibility. A copy of both letters should go on the child's school file.

Unauthorised Holiday Requests

The Headteacher must write to the parent who has made the request, informing them of the decision and the reason why this was made. The letter should clearly highlight that if the parent decides to take the child on the holiday, the absences will be unauthorised and a penalty notice will be issued to each parent with day to day care and responsibility for each child. A term time holiday leaflet must be enclosed with the letter. A copy of the letter should be sent to any parent who does not have day to day care and responsibility of the child but does have parental responsibility. Copies of both letters should go on the child's school file.

Delayed Return Following Authorised Term Time Holiday

If the child does not return to school on the agreed date following their holiday, the school should investigate the absence considering the East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Children Missing Education Policy. It is important to follow this policy to safeguard children, for example from forced marriage.

If a child returns to school later than the agreed date and their parent says their return was unavoidably delayed, this absence must be recorded as 'G' (family holiday not agreed or days in excess of agreement). This also applies where a holiday is taken in school holidays but extends into term time.



Penalty Notice Due To Term Time Holidays

Once the unauthorised holiday has been taken and the child has returned, the school must complete a penalty notice referral form (Appendix 3) and email it to education.welfare@eastriding.gov.uk, together with a copy of the holiday request form, the letter sent by the Headteacher to the parent and a copy of the child's up to date attendance certificate. Two penalty notices can be issued to any one parent with respect to any one child in one academic year.

If procedures have been followed correctly and the case meets the penalty notice criteria the education welfare service will issue a penalty notice.

Parent Pays Penalty Notice

The case is closed and the period of time that the parent received the penalty notice for will not be used in any further proceedings.

Parent Does Not Pay Penalty Notice

If after 42 days the penalty notice remains unpaid, the education welfare service will prepare the case for court. The school will be required to provide a head teacher's certificate prepared by their education welfare officer. The education welfare officer will keep the school informed regarding proceedings.

Term Time Holidays

Information for Parents

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is, however, a discretionary power held by head teachers to authorise absence in extenuating circumstances for up to 10 days in an academic year between September and July. This may include term time holidays, but this is **not an entitlement**. The Headteacher will only authorise holidays during term time in accordance with the East Riding Behaviour & Attendance Partnership 'Term Time Holiday Policy'. Head teachers will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education.

Your request for your child's absence from school to be authorised must fall in to one of the following categories-

1. Where you have to take holidays at a time specified by your employer.
2. Where a holiday abroad is recommended as part of your, or your child's, rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.



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3. Where you are considering emigration and wish to visit the country as part of your consideration.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a close member of the family that is taking place out of the area. To attend a wedding or funeral of a close member of the family that is taking place out of the area. *(At Molescroft this is extended to include all significant family events out of the area. This would include for example a Grandparent's 75th birthday or a Golden wedding anniversary, but not a cousin's 5th birthday party)*

Evidence would be required in each case.

The partnership has agreed that holidays will not, **under any circumstances** (including those mentioned above), be authorised at the following times-

1. The first six weeks of any academic year (for all pupils). *(This is strongly discouraged at Molescroft, but if a parent can prove that there is absolutely no alternative due to contractual arrangements and it is not the beginning of the Foundation Year, the Head Teacher may use his discretion to sanction an absence)*
2. Year six transition day (for pupils in that year group). *(At Molescroft Primary School this would be allowed if alternative arrangements can be made.)*
3. Year six SATs week (for pupils in that year group).
4. Year nine options time (for pupils in that year group).
5. At any time during years 10 & 11 (for pupils in these year groups).
6. At any time specified by the school (this will be communicated to parents by each school).

If your request is approved, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed school work. This is your responsibility and school are not obliged to provide work for your child to complete.

Any excessive family holiday or any unauthorised leave of absence will be recorded as unauthorised by the school on your child's records. This may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court

Penalty Notices



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With the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act (2003) the local authority has statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent or carer.

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post direct to the home of a parent/carer after possibly just one warning, or in the case of absences without acceptable cause, without warning. This includes pupils caught on truancy sweeps, **excessive or unauthorised family holidays** and persistent late arrival after the close of registration.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable for prosecution or a penalty notice, it is important you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this, or if you need help to achieve improvement, then please contact your school to discuss this.

Further advice and support can also be made available to you through the education welfare service.

Contact

Education Welfare Service
Room FF20
County Hall
Beverley
East Riding of Yorkshire
HU17 9BA
education.welfare@eastriding.gov.uk
(01482) 392146

We advise that you do not book a holiday until you have submitted a 'Term Time Holiday Request Form' and received confirmation from the Headteacher that they are able, in line with the 'East Riding of Yorkshire's Behaviour and Attendance Partnership Policy for Term Time Holidays', to authorise the request



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EAST RIDING

OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

Education Welfare Service

Penalty Notice Referral Form

Name of Referrer				
Referral is from	School		Police	

Name of school/police station	
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<i>Full Name of Child</i>			
<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Date of Birth</i>	<i>School Year</i>

<i>Full Name(s) of Person(s) with parental responsibility</i>	
<i>1. First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>
<i>2. First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>

Address (including postcode)

Period of absence for which a penalty notice is requested	<i>From (Week commencing date)</i>	<i>To (Week ending date)</i>
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Specific reasons for believing a penalty notice is appropriate: (Continue overleaf if needed)

Empty box for specific reasons for believing a penalty notice is appropriate.

Large empty box for additional information or notes.

I certify that during the period indicated above, the school was open for _____ sessions during which time the name pupil attended for _____ sessions.

_____ of the _____ sessions were **unauthorised** by the school. Please attach a copy of registration certificate.

Name _____ Signature _____

Position _____ Date _____

EWO Signature _____ Date _____



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Please make sure the following documents are attached to this referral:

For referrals for unauthorised absence

- Penalty notice warning letter
- Attendance certificate

Referrals for unauthorised term time holiday

- A copy of the holiday form
- Attendance certificate showing the 'Gs'

Referrals for truancy where a PCSO has found a child in a public place during school hours without good reason

- A copy of the witness statement
- An attendance certificate

The penalty notice can only be processed with all the relevant documents attached.



10. CONCLUSION

This policy is designed to be a useful, informative working document. It has been designed to be amended in the light of practice and procedures. It seeks to support the East Riding of Yorkshire Local Authority in our shared aim to ensure the maximum attendance and maximum benefit for pupils from their school life. It also seeks to support families. The school wishes to be a friend to families recognising the central role which a successful family life contributes to the development of the individual and citizen of the future.

See also 'Holiday Leaflet for Parents'