

Appendix A

## **Crawley Schools PARENTAL REQUEST TO SCHOOL TO AUTHORISE AN ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

(Print back to back)

Child's Name	
Date of birth	
Year Group	
Class/form	
Name of person making request & relationship with child	
Address	
Phone Number	
Dates your child will be absent from school	

Absences will only be authorised if this request is made in advance of the dates your child will be absent from school AND if the circumstances of the absence are exceptional. There is no entitlement to take a child out of school for a family holiday.

The law states that parents must ensure their children regularly attend school to receive their education. The head teacher can only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional is likely to be rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

Whether the absence is exceptional is at the head teacher's discretion based on their assessment of the situation and can vary from school to school. A weeks' absence for holiday and a weeks' absence for illness would give an attendance figure below 95%. The government considers attendance unacceptable below 95%.

The head teacher will consider the reasons for your absence request. You may be asked to provide evidence to support your request. Please note that having already booked a holiday will not be considered as a good reason for term time absence. In relation to 'unavoidable' absence, the head teacher will consider whether the event could have reasonably been scheduled at another time. Issues of cost will not be considered as an exceptional reason.

If you wish for this absence to be authorised, you will need to fully explain (together with evidence) why the circumstances of this absence are exceptional.

Why is this absence exceptional? (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)
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Continued over...

Declaration

I confirm that the information I have given on this form is true. I understand that if I do not fully complete this form, fully respond to requests for further information or that ultimately the absence is not authorised, my child's attendance will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. I understand that I must ensure my child attends school regularly and that failing to do so is a criminal offence which may result in legal proceedings being taken against me, either through a Penalty Notice or by prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Signed:..... Date: .....  
(Parent/Carer)

Full Name:.....

Unless further information is required, a decision will be sent to you within 5 school days.

## **Crawley Schools' Leave of Absence Policy**

Parents must state why they consider it essential for them to take their child out of school as absence from learning has been proven adversely to affect children's academic progress.

Schools cannot authorise absence except in unavoidable and exceptional circumstances. Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for confirmation from a medical professional if a child's absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. Unacceptable reasons for absence will be classed as unauthorised. Regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, if after ten days the pupil fails to return and no contact can be made with the parents/carers, the school will make a referral to Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI), which will make reasonable enquiries and consult with the Child Missing Education Team (CME). If the school can make contact with the parents/carers, it will warn them, if possible in writing, that it will consider taking the pupil off roll if s/he does not return by an agreed date. If the pupil does not return within 20 days and no reasonable explanation is given, the school will consult with CME and, in line with DfE guidance, consider taking the pupil off roll. If taken off roll, parents/carers would need to reapply for a place through West Sussex County Council Admissions (North) on their return. A place cannot be guaranteed at the current school.

There is no legal entitlement to holidays during term time and this should be avoided if at all possible. It will automatically be classed as unauthorised absence. Parents/carers should be aware that Crawley Schools will follow the WSCC guidelines on issuing FPN and unauthorised absence, i.e. issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) if a child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week period (each half day counts as one absence),

- by non-attendance at school
- by arriving persistently late at school (after registration has closed)
- by parents/carers taking their child on an unauthorised holiday during the school term.

The FPN is an alternative to prosecution and gives parents/carers an opportunity to discharge their criminal liability by paying a fine of £120, which must be paid within 28 days. If paid within 21 days, the fine is reduced to £60. After 28 days, the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) will consider prosecuting for the original non-attendance, not for the non-payment of the FPN. Further information on legal action can be found on [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK).

## **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant **any** leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the leave is granted, they should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.

A form obtained from the school office must be completed when withdrawal from learning is being requested (see Appendix A).

Parents/carers should be aware that Crawley Schools will follow the WSCC guidelines on issuing FPN and unauthorised absence, i.e. issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) if a child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week period (each half day counts as one absence),

- by non-attendance at school
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In exceptional circumstances a pupil may be granted authorised leave. However, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, if after ten days the pupil fails to return and no contact can be made with the parents/carers, the school will make a referral to PEI which will make reasonable enquiries and consult with the Child Missing Education Team (CME). If the school can make contact with the parents/carers, it will warn them, if possible in writing, that it will consider taking the pupil off roll if s/he does not return by an agreed date. If the pupil does not return within 20 days and no reasonable explanation is given, the school will consult with CME and, in line with DfE guidance, consider taking the pupil off roll. If taken off roll, parents/carers would need to reapply for a place through West Sussex County Council Admissions (North) on their return. A place cannot be guaranteed at the current school.

Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for medical clarification if a child's medical absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. If it has been necessary for a child to have extended absence due to illness, the school will work with the child, parents/carers and any other involved agencies to instigate a re-integration programme for that child.

Crawley Schools provide a broad, balanced curriculum but for children to access the many opportunities that are provided, it is necessary for them to attend school regularly and punctually. Good school attendance will be recognised; schools use reward systems e.g. children with 100% attendance at the end of the year may be awarded a special certificate in assembly.

**Date agreed:** 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015

**Effective from:** 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015