



# Sandford St. Martin's

PRIMARY SCHOOL

## LEAVE FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES REQUEST FORM

Before you fill in this form please read the information below very carefully. You should then complete the form, **sign and date parts A and B**, and return the whole form to the Head Teacher via the school office.

It is essential that children and young people form good habits of regular attendance at school from an early age and that good attendance is maintained throughout their school career. It is a legal requirement that all children should attend their educational provision and it is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure that their children attend school.

### Unauthorised Leave in Term Time

We most strongly advise that you do not take pupils out of school for holidays in term time. There are only 190 statutory school days, which leaves 175 days for holidays and there must be **exceptional reasons** for a pupil to be authorised as absent from school. The school is obliged to operate under Dorset Council Attendance Policy.

In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, a Penalty Notice can be issued in exceptional circumstances, for example where a parent takes a child on holiday during term time without the school authorising the absence. In such circumstances, a minimum of 10 half day sessions of unauthorised absence will apply before a Penalty Notice may be issued by Dorset Council. The authorised person may issue a Penalty Notice without first issuing a formal warning to the parent as would otherwise be required. However s/he should still be satisfied that the parent was informed beforehand that, in some exceptional circumstances e.g. term time holiday, unauthorised absence could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued without further warning.

### Who can receive a Penalty Notice?

The level of absence that is necessary before a Penalty Notice can be issued is 10 or more half days of unauthorised absence within a 12 school week period. Any Penalty Notice issued must be addressed to one parent but a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent/carer liable for the offence or offences. An authorised person has discretion when deciding whether to issue one or more parents of a child with a Penalty Notice. This is to enable account to be taken of the specific circumstances in individual cases.

### Why good attendance is important:

In recent years, much research has been carried out on the effects that poor attendance can have on children's progress at school and how well they achieve in life. Taking pupils out of school in term time means that they miss out on crucial learning and it puts pressure on them to catch up. Statistical evidence shows that reduced attendance correlates with lower grades in national tests and examinations.

The following statistics may surprise you: **1 day off a fortnight = 90% attendance**

Now 90% attendance might sound quite good, but what it really means is...

- Your child is absent for lessons for the equivalent of one-half day every week
- In one year, 4 whole weeks of lessons are missed
- Continued attendance at 90% over 5 years means your child has missed half a school year.

The following are some of the problems which often result from poor attendance:

- Your child has difficulty in keeping up with his or her work
- Teachers may not find it possible to give the extra time needed to help your child catch up
- Your child's absence can disrupt the learning of others in the class
- Your child misses a critical early stage in learning, without which further development of knowledge and skill is severely hindered.

We are therefore informing parents/carers that, should you wish to take your child out of school for any leave of absence, holidays or otherwise, requests will not be routinely granted. It is essential that any requests for leave of absence are discussed with your child's Headteacher prior to the request being made. Any absence which has not been authorised by your child's school will be recorded as 'unauthorised' and this has the potential to impact on your child's overall absence figure and could result in legal action.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

**PART A (To be retained by the office)**

I ask permission for the pupil(s) named below to have leave of absence from school for an exceptional circumstance for the period shown. I understand that if permission is not granted any absence will be deemed unauthorised and the parent(s)/carer(s) of the child could be issued with a Penalty Notice if the leave is unauthorised and fits the criteria as explained on page 1.

Name of pupil(s): ..... Class: .....  
 .....Class: .....

Leave of absence dates: From.....to..... inclusive

**Please Outline the Reason for Absence Below:** *If you prefer to give your reasons privately and in confidence, as well as in writing, please make an appointment to speak to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.*

Signature: Parent/Carer: .....Date.....

**Office use only:** absence authorised/ absence unauthorised/ referred to Dorset Council.

**PART B (To be signed by the parent/guardian and retained by the school office)**

I accept that the school may not be able to make up any work my child has/children have missed during any absence.

Signature: Parent/Carer: .....Date.....

**PART C (To be returned to the parent/carer)**

Dear Parent/Carer of ..... Class: .....

(Delete as appropriate) • Leave is not granted for the period requested in line with the Government's changes to school attendance regulations and Dorset Council's Attendance Policy. • Leave is granted for exceptional circumstances as detailed by the parent/carer.

Headteacher: ..... Date: .....