**Essex unauthorising leave of absence template letter**

**School Logo / Headed Paper / Sent from an official school email address with a clear email signature**

* **This communication should be pasted into the body of an email (rather than as an attachment), which should be sent with a read receipt requested;**
* **The ‘TO’ field of the email must be addressed to an individual parent (separate emails should be sent to each individual parent);**
* **The subject field should make clear the content of the communication. Please note parent/s email addresses must not be in the CC or BCC field;**
* **If being sent as a letter, please ensure the full address section is completed as per the below and send to each parent via first class royal mail post.**

**IMPORTANT POINTS FOR SCHOOL TO NOTE:**

* All school responses should be sent within 5 working days where the application for leave was received 4 or more weeks ahead of the planned leave
* Where less than 4 weeks’ notice of the planned leave has been provided, school responses should be sent within 3 working days. This will provide families with adequate time to reconsider the planned leave, and make alternative arrangements should they wish to avoid penalty notice fines
* When making a request for legal intervention following a leave of absence, schools must apply within 10 school days from the date on which the pupil returns to school

Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

**RE: Pupil Name (Date of Birth)**

I refer to your application dated DAY DATE MONTH YEAR for leave of absence for CHILD FULL NAME to be absent from DAY DATE MONTH YEAR (first day of expected absence), until DAY DATE MONTH YEAR (last day of expected absence), a total of ENTER NUMBER school days.

You will already be aware from your application, our school’s attendance policy and the Essex published Code of Conduct relating to school attendance, that the law requires parents to seek permission from the head teacher to take their child out of school during term time. The law states permission can only be granted if:

1. An application has been made in advance by the parent the child normally lives with; **and**
2. There are exceptional circumstances.

Following due consideration, I am unable to agree to your request as the reason provided, i.e. ADD REASON provided by parent is not considered exceptional.

I must warn you that, if you do take your child out of school for this time, the absences will not be authorised, and the Local Authority may take legal action, as outlined in the application form. For your convenience, please find attached a further copy of the summary sheet from Essex County Council outlining key information to help parents understand the National Framework for legal intervention.

Please visit the Essex County Council website and search for “penalty notices” for more information about the penalty notice fine levels and maximum penalty notice limits which are detailed within the Essex Code of Conduct.

The matter will be recorded on your child/ren’s school record.

If you would like to meet with me to discuss this matter and/or you believe there are exceptional circumstances which mean the holiday cannot be taken during a school holiday period, please contact me to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher



**Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance**

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

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| **National Threshold**  |
| A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, this is: * 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period
* These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence
* For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold
* The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years
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| **Who may be fined?**  |
| * Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school
* For example, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines
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| **First Offence**  |
| The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be: * £80 per parent, per child if paid **within 21 days**
* If **not paid within 21 days**, the fine will increase to **£160 per parent, per child**, payable between the 22nd and 28th day
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| **Second Offence (within 3 years)**  |
| The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be: * £160 per parent, per child – payable within 28 days
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| **Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)**  |
| The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice WILL NOT be issued, and the case will be presented **straight to the Magistrate’s Court** * **Prosecution** can result in **criminal records** and **fines of up to £2,500**
* Cases found **guilty** in a **Magistrates Court** can show on the parent’s future DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a **‘failure to safeguard a child’s education’**
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