

16th September 2024

Leave of Absence – September 2024 onwards

I am writing to families to outline Chadsmead Primary Academy's expectations for requesting leave of absence. Over the past academic year, we have received an influx of requests for leave of absence from families to take their children out of school during term time. Regular attendance to school is not only a legal requirement, but is essential for children and young people to achieve their full potential and get the best possible start in life.

There are 175 non-school days a year for holidays, cultural experiences and family time. Families should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable. The school understands that on occasions, parents/carers may need to make a request for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and School Governors support this; therefore, children will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the local authority, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. It is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. If your leave of absence request is unauthorised and your child is then absent on the requested days, you may be liable for a penalty notice issued by Staffordshire County Council. It is important to note that the school does not benefit from any funds obtained through fines.

The school defines 'exceptional circumstances' as situations that are of sufficient seriousness that the absence can be justified. The school considers each application for term time leave of absence individually, taking into account the facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at my discretion if it is deemed to be the

result of exceptional circumstances.

From August 2024, in line with the new national framework, the fine for school absences across the country will increase to £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a Parenting Order or prosecution will be considered. If a parent is prosecuted and attends court because their child hasn't been attending school, they could get a fine of up to £2,500.

In all cases where a leave of absence is being requested, a Leave of Absence form must be completed and returned at least 2 weeks prior to the planned leave.

You can collect a paper form from the School Office or request that one is sent home with your child, alternatively you can find a copy on our Virtual Office:

[Chadsmead Primary Academy - Virtual Office \(chadsmeadacademy.co.uk\)](https://chadsmeadacademy.co.uk)

I am fully aware of the financial implication which families face when booking a holiday outside of term time and I am aware that the 'cost of living' will further hinder families wanting to book holidays over the Summer. However, as a Headteacher, my job is to ensure the young people at this school receive the best education possible. In order to achieve this, they must attend school every day possible. It is your legal responsibility as a parent/carer to ensure your child attends school to receive their education. The term dates for this Academic year have been included again with this letter so that you are able to plan ahead and not miss any school days unnecessarily.

Yours sincerely



Mrs G Grainger

Headteacher



Term Dates 2024-2025

Autumn Term 2024

Opens	Wednesday 4 th September 2024
Closes	Friday 25 th October 2024
Opens	Monday 4 th November 2024
Closes	Friday 20 th December 2024

Spring Term 2025

Opens	Tuesday 7 th January 2025
Closes	Friday 14 th February 2025
Opens	Monday 24 th February 2025
Closes	Friday 11 th April 2025

Summer Term 2025

Opens	Monday 28 th April 2025
Bank Holiday (School is closed)	Monday 5 th May 2025
Closes	Friday 23 rd May 2025
Opens	Monday 2 nd June 2025
Closes	Friday 18 th July 2025

School Inset Days* (School will be closed)

Monday 2 nd September 2024
Tuesday 3 rd September 2024
Monday 6 th January 2025
Friday 27 th June 2025
Monday 21 st July 2025

*Please note 1 more INSET day will be confirmed in the Autumn Term