

April 2024

Dear parents/carers,

I am writing to inform you of our policy on 'term time holidays' along with government response to holidays.

Schools have been encouraged to communicate with parents regarding requests for absence and the pending increase of penalties.

Under the Education Act parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend school. Children can only be absent from school if they are too ill to attend or have advanced permission from the Principal.

At Darlinghurst we promote that 'Every Day counts' and are regular in our communication.

**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

We have seen a rise in attendance and improved communication of absence and continue to support or challenge poor attendance or persistent absence.

However, over the last few weeks we have seen an increase in holiday forms being submitted to the office with notification of planned absence.

Parents cannot authorise absences, only schools can do this. Principals cannot authorise school absence purely for the reason of a family holiday. Discretion of leave is not an automatic entitlement and permission from the Principal must be sought. They can only grant absence for 'exceptional circumstances'.

All schools work to strict government guidelines.

Our policy outlines that;

All requests must be submitted with ample time for review and a parental meeting with the principal.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. This is legislation.

'Exceptional circumstances' are interpreted as 'being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time'.

We will not agree leave during term time under any of the following circumstances:

- Any time in September.
- During statutory assessment periods in May (KS2) and June (KS1). Year 1 children also need to be in school throughout the dates set by the Government for statutory phonics tests.
- When a pupil's attendance already includes any level of unauthorised absence, or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

If a request is unauthorised but the leave is still taken the case could be referred to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice.

Please be aware that under the new national framework, 'fines' can be issued for a child missing 5 days for unauthorised reasons. Fines are increasing for parents who take children on term time holidays. Parents could be fined £80 per child, per parent, per absence (which doubles if the fine is not paid within 21 days).

Finally, please note that the academy will not provide work for children to do during their holiday absence.

Please refer to the policy for further detail. [Attendance Policy 2023 2024.pdf \(darlinghurst.uk\)](#)

Academy term dates can be found on our website [Term Dates – Darlinghurst Academy](#)

Yours faithfully,



Miss Davis

Attendance Officer & Nursery Admissions