

Date ratified at Full
Directors' Meeting
6 December 2018

Review
TLS committee

St John the Baptist



Catholic Multi Academy Trust

THE MAT MISSION STATEMENT

Our family of schools is united in the belief that God's love, peace, truth, and joy is for all. We are dedicated to the achievement of excellence in all we do. We cherish the uniqueness of each of our school communities and celebrate together as one Trust family. By following Jesus' example we bear witness to the greatness of God.

'To think, to feel, to do' Pope Francis

St John the Baptist Catholic MAT
Company No: 7913261
Registered Office: Surrey Street, Norwich NR1 3PB

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME POLICY



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact the Company Secretary on 01603 611431 and we will do our best to help.

Holidays in Term Time Policy

A. Background

St John the Baptist Catholic MAT has adopted a policy in line with the Department for Children, Schools and Families June 2008 guidance on applying the Education Student Registration Regulations (2006) and the more recent DfE guidance following the Isle of Wight judgement.

There is a strong statistical link between attendance and attainment; students with high attendance levels tend to have high levels of attainment but those with low attendance levels tend to have low attainment levels.

Punctual and regular attendance is an essential requirement for successful learning. Students' attendance records are passed on through all their schools and to prospective employers/colleges.

Note that in this policy reference to the Headteacher covers the Head of School role.

B. Holidays in Term Time

It is important to realise that time off school for family holidays is not a right. There is however a discretionary power to allow leave at the Headteacher's discretion in instances of exceptional circumstance such as family crisis.

Holidays should not be taken in term time for the following reasons, and these are likely not be authorised by the school:

- availability of cheap holidays;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

C. Procedure

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for authorisation for a holiday during term time should complete the relevant school's Absence Request Form, which is available from Student Reception or the School Office. The Absence Request Form should be returned to the student's Head of Year or Headteacher, and at the same time an appointment to speak with the Head of Year or Headteacher should also be made.

Parents should discuss requests for holidays in term time with the school before making any holiday booking. It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that confirmation from the school is obtained before booking any holidays. Parents/carers should not assume permission is granted until they receive written confirmation from the school about their holiday request.

After due consideration of a written request for absence for a holiday during term time, the Head of Year, Headteacher or Attendance Lead will write to the parents/carers informing them whether their request has been authorised.

Appendix 1 – Absence Request Form

Schools within the St John the Baptist Catholic MAT - Absence Request Form

Punctual and regular attendance is an essential requirement for successful learning. Students' attendance records are passed on through all their schools and to prospective employers/colleges.

There are 175 non-school days a year. This gives families the opportunity to

- spend time together
- Go on family visits and days out
- Go on holiday
- Go shopping
- Attend routine appointments

The school may authorise absence for some areas, including

- Medical visits (which cannot be arranged out of school time)
- Compassionate circumstances (e.g. a family funeral)

The Government and Norfolk & Suffolk County Councils state that parents should not normally take children on holiday in term time. Time off school for family holidays is not a right, and is at the discretion of the school.

Authorisation for family holidays in term time is only given if there are special circumstances. These may include the need for a family to spend time together following a crisis, or because of restrictions on the time when parents are allowed to take time off from their employment. The availability of cheap holidays is not considered a special circumstance.

Where there are special circumstances the school may authorise up to a maximum of ten days leave. If you believe there are strong reasons why your holiday request should be considered, please complete the following application form. Please be aware that in most cases the holiday will not be authorised.

Previous attendance records will be used by the Headteacher (or Head of Year or Attendance Lead) in considering individual requests. The student's stage of education, the proximity of any exams, and the disruption the holiday would cause to their education, will also influence whether a holiday request is authorised. If parental employer restrictions influence an application, the school is entitled to seek confirmation from the employer.

The Directors and Local Governing Bodies would like to stress that in most cases time off during term time for holidays will not be authorised by the school.

Please return this form to the School Office or to Student Reception for the attention of the Headteacher.

Name of student Form

Address

Reason for application and dates.....

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I would like to request that the student miss days of schooling.

Signature of parent/carer Date.....

Appendix 2 – School letter refusing authorisation of a holiday request (template)

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for completing an Absence Request Form. After considering your request with relevant colleagues, and with reference to your child’s previous attendance record and the disruption to their education that the proposed absence may cause, I regret to inform you that the period of absence (dates) cannot be authorised by the school. The reason for this decision is.....

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Schools are unable to authorise absence for holidays during term-time unless there are special circumstances such as a family crisis.

Holidays which are taken for the following reasons should not be authorised:

- *availability of cheap holidays;*
- *availability of the desired accommodation;*
- *poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and*
- *overlap with beginning or end of term.’*

Attendance is a very high priority for the Department for Education, and is linked to student achievement. I hope you will understand the reasons for the school’s decision. There is a requirement that schools comply with DFE guidelines.

Please note that parents can be given a penalty notice or prosecuted by the local authority for periods of unauthorised holidays. If you wish to discuss this matter further then please contact the Headteacher at the school.

Appendix 3- Parent Letter for Fixed Penalty notice

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have:

1. 10 consecutive sessions¹ of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time; or
2. 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance at school and legal intervention

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. Within our school our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind to all parents/carers regarding the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must to continue take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention through the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where they have:

1. 10 consecutive sessions¹ of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time; or
2. 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

Any pupil at our school who meets either of the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child, which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a fixed penalty notice fine is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the local Magistrates' Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended school regularly.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

¹ Please note that the school day consists of 2 sessions.