



Dunster First School & Exmoor Coast Federation



ATTENDANCE and REGISTRATION POLICY

CONTEXT

This policy has been produced in consultation between the schools in the Exmoor Coast Federation and in liaison with the Education Attendance Service.

PRINCIPLES AND AIMS

Aims

1. To maintain and improve upon current attendance levels through a consistent approach to registration and the monitoring of attendance.
2. To ensure the completion and maintenance of attendance registers.
3. To work with the seven schools of the Federation to promote high levels of attendance and good punctuality across the Federation reach.

We work in partnership with parents, carers, support agencies and the local community to encourage and support all children to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality. Where attendance levels fall below this we will work with the Local Authority to make full use of statutory duties available to encourage and ensure excellent levels of attendance. Should these efforts fail to improve attendance the school will actively seek, in liaison with the Education Attendance Service, the use of legal remedies, including Penalty Notices and parental prosecutions.

We will:

- Celebrate success
- Monitor attendance rates and offer support to families where issues are arising
- keep & maintain accurate records
- liaise with partners, inc. Education Attendance Officer

EXPECTATIONS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School Staff

The teacher in charge of a class must accurately take a register of attendance at the school agreed times and in accordance with the agreed method (see School Register & Attendance Policy – Appendix 1).

A designated member of the staff on the first day will, if no reason for the absence is known, call to ascertain this information.

The Headteacher (or designated member of senior staff) will regularly monitor attendance and contact parents when concerns arise.

Parents

It is the parents' legal responsibility to ensure that the child attend school. This includes being punctual. When a child is absent it is the parents' responsibility to inform the school at the earliest possible occasion.

Governors

Governors have a responsibility to have an overview of the schools attendance and to monitor this. They are to act as a critical friend and determine targets and the impact of the attendance policies and approaches.

STANDARDS and MONITORING

1. The Education Attendance Officer and Headteacher will initially monitor attendance.
2. Children's attendance will be classified in the following way:

97% to 100%	Excellent attendance
95% to 97%	Good attendance
92% to 94%	Satisfactory
Below 92%	Attendance below this level may trigger action by the school
3. The Headteacher (or designated member of senior staff) will check the attendance of all children on a half termly basis. At the end of each term a summary of every child's attendance will be sent home.
4. Children who achieve an attendance level of 100% at the end of a term will receive a certificate.
5. Parents may be informed by letter if their child's attendance falls below 92%. This communication will be supportive and will take into account individual circumstances. Persistent levels of attendance below 92% are of concern and will be investigated.
6. If a child's attendance levels approach 92%, they will be discussed with the Local Authority Attendance Officer.
7. Attendance figures are monitored by the Government on a termly basis. The annual attendance figures for the school are published in the school prospectus and/or website.

Record Keeping

1. Registers and all related correspondence will be kept for a period of six years.
2. Any correspondence regarding concerns about a child's attendance will be kept in the child's individual file. This will be passed onto the next school at the point of transfer.

ABSENCE REPORTING Guidance for parents/carers

Absence Due To Illness

- DAY 1 Parent/carer to 'phone the school by 9.15 am on the day of absence to confirm the following:
- Child's name
 - Reason for absence ("unwell" is not sufficient) – to be recorded on electronic register
 - Time/date of Dr. appointment (if made)
- DAY 2 As DAY 1
- DAY 3 As DAY 1
- Note: If your child does not return to school on DAY 3, then from DAY 4 onwards, the school reserves the right to ask parents to provide supporting medical evidence – e.g. appointment card/letter; note from Dr.; specialist report; copy of prescription etc. – before consideration will be given whether or not to authorise the absences (wholly or in part)
- DAY 4+ Parent/carer to 'phone the school by 9.00am on each subsequent day of absence until either:
- Child returns to school, or
 - As otherwise agreed with a senior member of school staff

Formatted: Not Highlight

After 3 consecutive school days of absence will not automatically be authorised by the Head and relevant medical evidence to support the absence may be requested.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Any child accumulating 15 school days (30 sessions) of authorised absence due to illness within an academic year (consecutively or non-consecutively) (and not for a known and significant on-going health condition) will result in the school contacting the medical practitioners for further guidance. This is to ensure that the school is appropriately meeting the individual child's educational needs.

Formatted: Not Highlight

This policy has been shared with local GP representatives and is in place to safeguard the children.

Formatted: Not Highlight

The coding of any absence from school, for whatever reason(s) given, is ultimately at the sole discretion of the Head; therefore the school may request sight of relevant evidence to support an absence of any length of time.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to obtain the relevant evidence to support any absence from school.

Unauthorised absences of 5 days (10 sessions) or more in any 12 weeks period may result in your child's case being referred to the Education Attendance Service with a request for the consideration of a Penalty Notice to be issued to the parent(s)/Carer(s) responsible for the child's regular school attendance. Further details of the Penalty Notice process may be obtained from the EAO responsible to this school – telephone Simon See on 07917 837483 – or by clicking here: [EAS Guidance Docs](#).

Term-time Leave Requests, inc. holidays

Parents/carers have no entitlement to take their child out of school during term-time. Any requests for term-time leave, up to a maximum of 10 school days in an academic year, must satisfy the following conditions before they will be considered by the Head:

- Exceptional circumstances apply – e.g. forces personnel; significant year round seasonal employment restrictions (a letter from the employer stating to this effect must be provided); unforeseen family circumstances etc. Financial reasons are NOT an exceptional circumstance
- Requested in advance of leaving (at the earliest possible opportunity and at least two weeks notice)
- A definite return date provided – any child not returned to school on the expected date will be considered a 'Child Missing from Education' and will be referred to the Education Attendance Service as a safeguarding concern. This may trigger a home visit and involvement from the local police.

The coding of any absence from school, for whatever reason(s) given, is ultimately at the sole discretion of the Head; therefore the school may request sight of relevant evidence to support an absence of any length of time.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to obtain the relevant evidence to support any absence from school.

Further guidance regarding Term-time Leave and details of the Penalty Notice process may be obtained from the EAO responsible to this school – telephone Simon See on 07917 837483 – or by clicking here: [EAS Guidance Docs](#).

Appendix 1 Specific School Register Timing Policy

Appendix 2 Monitoring and Reward System

Appendix 3 ECF Absence Request Form

[Appendix 4](#) [School draft letter instead of WPN for G coded holiday](#)

Appendix 1 — School Register Timing Policy and Procedures

The following timings have been agreed and published in relation to St Dubricius Register Policy. These have been shared with parents and are on the school's website (12th December 2013)

9.00 am	School Open
9.15 am	Registration
9.17 am	Registration Closes
9.18 am	The point at which arrivals are classed as "late" and the register will be marked "L"
9.25 am	The point at which arrivals are classed as "unauthorised absence" and the register will be marked "U"
10.45 am	Morning Break
11.00 am	End of morning break
12.15 pm	Lunch break – Classes 1 and 2
12.30 pm	Lunch break – Class 3
1.15 pm	Lunch break ends – all classes
1.15 pm	Afternoon Registration
1.17 pm	Afternoon Registration Closes
3.15 pm	End of School

The following timings have been agreed and published in relation to St Dubricius Register Policy. These have been shared with parents and are on the school's website (12th December 2013)

9.00 am	School Open
9.15 am	Registration
9.17 am	Registration Closes
9.18 am	The point at which arrivals are classed as "late" and the register will be marked "L"
9.25 am	The point at which arrivals are classed as "unauthorised absence" and the register will be marked "U"
10.45 am	Morning Break
11.00 am	End of morning break
12.15 pm	Lunch break – Classes 1 and 2
12.30 pm	Lunch break – Class 3
1.15 pm	Lunch break ends – all classes
1.15 pm	Afternoon Registration
1.17 pm	Afternoon Registration Closes
3.15 pm	End of School

8.40am	School Open
9.00am	Registration
9.10am	Registration Closes. Children arriving after this time are marked down as being late and the register will be marked as "L"
9.30am	Children arriving after this time are marked down as an "Unauthorised Absence" and the register will be marked as "U"
12 noon	Lunch time starts for Reception Class, Years 1 and 2
1.25pm	Afternoon Registration
3.25pm	End of School

Registers are taken by the class teacher in the morning and in the afternoon. In the morning they are passed to office from where first day calling then takes place for any unaccounted for children. In the afternoon registers remain in class.

In the event of a fire / evacuation scenario registers are taken out to the assembly point (playground). (am. by Kim Rowe / Office staff and pm. by class teacher)

Registers are marked in accordance with the DFE guidance coding. See iPost

(<https://slp.somerset.gov.uk/somersetipost/iPost%20Documents/Absence%20and%20Attendance%20Codes%20Guidance%20Somerset%20Version%205.doc>)

Teachers unsure of the reason for absence are to make the register with a red circle. Coding will then be added once established by the office and agreed with the Headteacher.

Registers are taken electronically at 9.00am and 1.25pm using the SIMS Attendance system. It will be the Class Teacher's responsibility or in their absence the Supply Teacher's responsibility to take the register and submit it to the school office. If the SIMS electronic register is unavailable then a paper register will be completed and sent to the School Office.

A Head Count Book will also be completed at 9.00am and 1.25pm. A note will be made in the Head Count Book of the names of those children who are absent. Following registration, the Administrative Assistant or the School Business Manager will print a list of children absent from the school to be kept with the Head Count booklets from each class. The school's Admin Assistant, Ruth Thrush will keep the Head Count Books and will take them to the Assembly Points (Playgrounds) in the event of an evacuation of the school.

Registers are marked with the DFE guidance coding:

Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual reg)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other Authorised Circumstances	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration	Attendance Not Required	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed)	Unauthorised absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance Not Required	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance Not Required	Out for whole session
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance Not Required	Out for whole session
#	School closed to pupils & staff	Attendance Not Required	Out for whole session
-	All should attend / No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session

Teachers unsure of the reason for absence are to use the code "N" in the register.

Parents are asked to contact the school on the first, and each subsequent, day of unplanned absence. Should no call be received the Administrative Assistant or School Business Manager will make contact with the parent either by text message or telephone call. If no reason for an absence is given, or if the reason cannot be classified as "authorised", the absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. Should it not be possible to make contact with the child's home and there is no explanation forthcoming following a period of absence over a number of days, the Headteacher will contact Children's Social Care.

Registers are taken by the class teacher in the morning and in the afternoon. In the morning they are passed to office from where first day calling then takes place for any unaccounted for children. In the afternoon registers remain in class.

In the event of a fire / evacuation scenario registers are taken out to the assembly point (playground). (am. by Kim Rowe / Office staff and pm. by class teacher)

Registers are marked in accordance with the DFE guidance coding. See iPost <https://slp.somerset.gov.uk/somersetipost/iPost%20Documents/Absence%20and%20Attendance%20Codes%20Guidance%20Somerset%20Version%205.doc>

Teachers unsure of the reason for absence are to make the register with a red circle. Coding will then be added once established by the office and agreed with the Headteacher.

<https://slp.somerset.gov.uk/somersetipost/iPost%20Documents/Absence%20and%20Attendance%20Codes%20Guidance%20Somerset%20Version%205.doc>

The following timings have been agreed and published in relation to St Dubricius Register Policy. These have been shared with parents and are on the school's website (12th December 2013)

9.00 am	School Open
9.15 am	Registration
9.17 am	Registration Closes
9.18 am	The point at which arrivals are classed as "late" and the register will be marked "L"
9.25 am	The point at which arrivals are classed as "unauthorised absence" and the register will be marked "U"
10.45 am	Morning Break
11.00 am	End of morning break
12.15 pm	Lunch break – Classes 1 and 2
12.30 pm	Lunch break – Class 3
1.15 pm	Lunch break ends – all classes
1.15 pm	Afternoon Registration
1.17 pm	Afternoon Registration Closes
3.15 pm	End of School

Registers are taken by the class teacher in the morning and in the afternoon. In the morning they are passed to office from where first day calling then takes place for any unaccounted for children. In the afternoon registers remain in class.

In the event of a fire / evacuation scenario registers are taken out to the assembly point (playground). (am. by Kim Rowe / Office staff and pm. by class teacher)

Registers are marked in accordance with the DFE guidance coding. See iPost <https://slp.somerset.gov.uk/somersetipost/iPost%20Documents/Absence%20and%20Attendance%20Codes%20Guidance%20Somerset%20Version%205.doc>

Teachers unsure of the reason for absence are to make the register with a red circle. Coding will then be added once established by the office and agreed with the Headteacher. **Appendix 2 Monitoring and Reward System**

Attendance is continually monitored by staff and governors at the school through:

- Informal discussion between school staff
- Review at weekly Teaching Staff meetings
- Review at end of term Pupil Progress Meetings

- Parents or carers will be provided with a termly summary of their child's attendance. In the summer term this will form part of the child's end of year report.
- Termly reports on attendance will be provided for governors in the Headteachers Termly Report to Governors
- Annual attendance statistics for the school are reported in the school's prospectus and in the school's Self-Evaluation Statement.

Good attendance is rewarded by:

- Award of certificates for 100% attendance at the end of each term
 - Acknowledgement in newsletters for those children who achieve 100% attendance
 - Award of certificates for 100% attendance for the whole school year.
- ~~a) Attendance is continually monitored. However there are three formal methods:~~
- ~~b) ½ termly analysis~~
- ~~c) Termly meeting with EAO~~
- ~~d) Reports to Governors in SES (at least termly)~~
- ~~e) —~~
- ~~f) Certificates and stickers are distributed at the end of each half term to children achieving 100% attendance and records are kept in the attendance file.~~
- ~~g) —~~
- ~~h) Any child receiving 100% attendance for the year receives a large certificate in end of Year worship.~~

i) —

j) —



Exmoor Coast Federation

Absence Request Form

k) Absence Information

l) (A separate application must be completed for each child)

m) Name of child:	n) _____	o) Class:	p) _____
-------------------	----------	-----------	----------

q) Inclusive Dates of absence:		r) _____		s) _____
--------------------------------	--	----------	--	----------

v) Exceptional Reason for Absence:

w) _____

x) (You must submit requests for planned absences at least two weeks prior to the first day of absence.)

y) Signed (parent/guardian): _____	z) _____	aa) Date: _____	bb) _____
------------------------------------	----------	-----------------	-----------

ee) —

When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, the school will consider:

- The specific nature of the request
- The time and duration of the leave
- Your child's record of attendance
- _____
- The learning that will be missed

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS:

- There is no automatic right to absence for a family holiday. Authorisation of absence requests will depend on whether the application meets the LA 'Exceptional Circumstances' criteria.
- Authorisation during, and leading up to, examination periods (e.g. SATs) and in the first term of any new school placement (or academic year) will not be granted. Requests for extended leave will not be authorised, if a similar request was authorised (or extended leave was taken) during the previous academic year.
- Parents whose children are on a school register have a duty to ensure that their children attend regularly and if they fail to do so they may be guilty of an offence under the Education Act, 1993.
- NB. If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in a penalty notice being issued or legal action taken for poor attendance.

Formatted: Numbered + Level: 1 +
 Numbering Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at:
 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27
 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm

ff) For school use only

gg) Current attendance percentage:	ii) _____	jj) More than 97%	kk) Excellent
		— 95% to 97%	— Good

Exmoor Coast Federation

		92% to 95%	Satisfactory
		Less than 92%	Unsatisfactory
ll) — mm) — Attendance history:	nn) Year:	oo) Year:	pp) Year:
qq) — uu) —	rr) — SATs year? vv) — Holiday request?	tt) — xx) —	
yy) Decision			
zz) — bbb) —	aaa) — Authorised ccc) — Unauthorised		
ddd) — Comments: eee) —			
fff) Signed (Headteacher):		ggg) —	hhh) — Date: iii) —
jjj) — If you would like to discuss attendance matters further, please call: kkk) — Simon See (Educational Attendance Officer) on 01643 700858 or 07917 837483			

Formatted: Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm

Formatted: Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm

Formatted: Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm

Formatted: Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm

Formatted: Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm

Formatted: Left, Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm

Formatted: Left, Right: 0 cm, Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm, Adjust space between Latin and Asian text, Adjust space between Asian text and numbers



TERM TIME LEAVE

ADVICE FOR SCHOOLS AND PARENTS

Amendments to the 2006 regulations were made by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and come into force on 1 September 2013.

The amendments make it clear that schools can only grant leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances. All reference to a holiday and/or extended leave, including the threshold of ten school days is removed. Any request for leave must be made in writing for the attention of the Headteacher in advance.

There is no formal definition offered for exceptional leave at present by the Department for Education. However, from discussion with the DfE and concerned professional associations it is suggested that exceptional leave may include:

- Forces staff returning from lengthy active service abroad
- Police, Fire Service staff being told when they can or cannot take leave
- If a close family member has a terminal illness and it may be a last chance to be together especially if the family member lived overseas
- Parents having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period

Formatted: Right: 0 cm, Space After: 0 pt, Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm

The Exmoor Coast Federation, in recognition of some local employment practices, have added:

- Significant year round seasonal employment restrictions (Where NO leave is allowed in any published school holiday) (Evidence must be required to support this)

Formatted: Right: 0 cm, Space Before: 0 pt, Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm

Somerset County Council (SCC) supports schools:

- In expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school regularly. Any absence from school will impact on educational achievement, success in later life and longer term health and well being
- In ensuring the law is upheld. Parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance at school of their child. Schools must explain their stance on term time leave in their attendance policy so parents/carers are


Formatted: Right: 0 cm, Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: a, b, c, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 1.27 cm + Indent at: 1.9 cm, Adjust space between Latin and Asian text, Adjust space between Asian text and numbers

clear on expectations and potential consequences, such as any unauthorised absence including taking term time leave not agreed with the school, can result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent for each child. Any Penalty Notice unpaid is taken to Magistrates Court as failure to secure the regular attendance of their child. If found guilty of such an offence, they might receive a criminal conviction and a potential fine of up to £1,000.

SCC cannot override a school's decision not to authorise any term time leave. There is no right of appeal.

~~Taking a child on holiday in term time interrupts the learning of the whole class. Teachers have to spend time helping children catch up when they return. Parents should arrange holidays for the 13 week school holiday periods. Schools are open 190 days which leaves 175 days of the year for a holiday.~~

a) ~~Every day of your child's education is valuable. We hope that, when you have read this advice, you will consider that your child's education is too important to take extended absence during term time.~~

 <h2 style="text-align: center;">Absence Request Form</h2>			
<h3 style="color: blue;">Absence Information</h3>			
<p>(A separate application must be completed for each child)</p>			
Name of child: _____		Class: _____	
Inclusive Dates of absence:		From: _____	To: _____
Exceptional Reason for Absence: _____ _____ _____			
<p><i>(You must submit requests for planned absences at least two weeks prior to the first day of absence.)</i></p>			
Absence has also been requested for the following child(ren):			
Name: _____		School attending: _____	
Name: _____		School attending: _____	
Signed (parent/guardian): _____		Date: _____	
<p>When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, the school will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specific nature of the request • The time and duration of the leave • Your child's record of attendance • The learning that will be missed 			
<p>IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no automatic right to absence for a family holiday. Authorisation of absence requests will depend on whether the application meets the LA 'Exceptional Circumstances' criteria. • Authorisation during, and leading up to, examination periods (e.g. SATs) and in the first term of any new school placement (or academic year) will not be granted. Requests for extended leave will not be authorised, if a similar request was authorised (or extended leave was taken) during the previous academic year. • Parents whose children are on a school register have a duty to ensure that their children attend regularly and if they fail to do so they may be guilty of an offence under the Education Act, 1993. • NB. If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in a penalty notice being issued or legal action taken for poor attendance. 			
<p>For school use only</p>			
		More than 97%	Excellent

Formatted Table

Formatted Table

<u>Current attendance percentage:</u>		<u>95% to 97%</u>	<u>Good</u>
		<u>92% to 94%</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>
		<u>Less than 92%</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>
<u>Attendance history:</u>	<u>Year:</u>	<u>Year:</u>	<u>Year:</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>SATs year?</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Holiday request?</u>			
Decision			
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Authorised</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Unauthorised</u>			
<u>Comments:</u>			
<u>Signed:</u>		<u>Date:</u>	
<i>If you would like to discuss attendance matters further, please call:</i> Simon See (Educational Attendance Officer) on 01643 700858 or 07917 837483			

Formatted Table

TERM TIME LEAVE

ADVICE FOR SCHOOLS AND PARENTS



Formatted: Font: 11 pt

Formatted: Font: 11 pt

Formatted: Font: 11 pt

Amendments to the 2006 regulations were made by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and come into force on 1 September 2013.

The amendments make it clear that schools can only grant leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances. All reference to a holiday and/or extended leave, including the threshold of ten school days is removed. Any request for leave must be made in writing for the attention of the Headteacher in advance.

There is no formal definition offered for exceptional leave at present by the Department for Education. However, from discussion with the DfE and concerned professional associations it is suggested that exceptional leave may include:

- Forces staff returning from lengthy active service abroad
- Police, Fire Service staff being told when they can or cannot take leave
- If a close family member has a terminal illness and it may be a last chance to be together especially if the family member lived overseas
- Parents having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period

The Exmoor Coast Federation, in recognition of some local employment practices, have added:

- Significant year round seasonal employment restrictions (Where NO leave is allowed in any published school holiday)(Evidence must be required to support this)

Somerset County Council (SCC) supports schools:

- In expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school regularly. Any absence from school will impact on educational achievement, success in later life and longer term health and well being
- In ensuring the law is upheld. Parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance at school of their child. Schools must explain their stance on term time leave in their attendance policy so parents/carers are clear on expectations and potential consequences, such as any unauthorised absence including taking term time leave not agreed with the school, can result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent for each child. Any Penalty Notice unpaid is taken to Magistrates Court as failure to secure the regular attendance of their child. If found guilty of such an offence, they might receive a criminal conviction and a potential fine of up to £1,000.

SCC cannot override a school's decision not to authorise any term time leave. There is no right of appeal.

Taking a child on holiday in term time interrupts the learning of the whole class. Teachers have to spend time helping children catch up when they return. Parents should arrange holidays for the 13 week school holiday periods. Schools are open 190 days which leaves 175 days of the year for a holiday.

Every day of your child's education is valuable. We hope that, when you have read this advice, you will consider that your child's education is too important to take extended absence during term time.

Dear [parents]

Re. [Child's name & DoB]

I am writing to draw your attention to the matter of your child having recorded 10 or more consecutive sessions of 'G' coded absence within the last 12 school weeks, due specifically to unauthorised term-time leave (holiday). Please refer to the enclosed Registration Certificate for details.

As your child is of statutory school age and not attending regularly, you as the parent/carer may be guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and I am expected to take action to address this.

At my discretion, I may apply to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued, as per Somerset County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Practice. This would give you the opportunity to pay a £60 fine within 21 days of the Notice being issued, or £120 if paid after the 21st day, but on or before the 28th day. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within the 28 days you may be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school and could be fined up to £1000, if found guilty.

However, on this occasion I have deferred the option to do this. Instead, I am informing you that I shall continue to monitor your child's attendance and if any further unauthorised absences occur a Penalty Notice may be issued without further warning.

If you have any queries about the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me. Further information regarding school attendance can be found at www.somerset.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher.

Formatted: Font: 11 pt