

Friday, 11th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Holidays and Avoidable Absences in Term Time

The Exe Valley and Moorsway Federation believes that in order for a pupil to fully benefit from their education, good attendance is crucial. It is the policy of our schools to celebrate achievement and full attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career.

In September 2013, an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 came in to force and greater clarity was introduced to the issue of schools authorising absence requests. In addition, on 19 August 2024, an amendment to the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 came into force and set out a new National Framework for issuing penalty notices. These changes reinforced the Government's view that every minute of every school day is vital and that pupils should only be granted authorised absences by the school in 'exceptional circumstances'.

A family holiday is not normally considered by the Government to be an 'exceptional circumstance' and therefore will not be authorised by this school.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you, that should you choose to take your child out of school without the authorisation of the school, then Parental Responsibility Measures could be instigated. This could mean receiving any of the following;

- A Penalty Notice
- A summons to the Magistrate Court which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.

Schools are required to notify the Local Authority if a pupil has a number of unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absences can be acquired when:

- 1) Leave has been requested, but the circumstances are such that the school is unable to authorise the leave and it is taken anyway.
- 2) Leave is not requested and/or the school has grounds to believe that the child has been taken out of school for an avoidable reason (example – a family holiday). Only the Head of School can authorise an absence. This year there have been occasions when Devon schools have been notified that the pupil is sick, but the school later discovers and reasonably believes that the reason given for the absence is not genuine.
- 3) A child continually arrives late after the registration period has closed.

The EVMF schools have to notify the Local Authority in all of the circumstances listed above. Should a Penalty Notice be issued as a result of unauthorised absence then one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. In addition to natural parents and any person with parental responsibility, any person considered to have day to day care and control of a young person is deemed to be a parent in matters relating to education and school nonattendance (s576 Education Act 1996).

From 19th August 2024, following changes to secondary legislation, the amount charged in a penalty notice was increased.

Brampford Speke C of E Primary School Brampford Speke, Devon EX5 5HE T: 01392 841414 brampfordadmin@exevalleyfederation.org.uk
Cheriton Fitzpaine Primary School Cheriton Fitzpaine, Crediton EX17 4AN T: 01363 866456 cheritonadmin@exevalleyfederation.org.uk
Newton St Cyres Primary School Station Road, Newton St Cyres, Devon EX5 5DL T: 01392 851267 newtonadmin@exevalleyfederation.org.uk
Sandford School, Sandford, Crediton, Devon EX17 4NE T: 01363 772256 sandfordadmin@exevalleyfederation.org.uk
Silverton C of E Primary School Coach Road, Silverton, Devon EX5 4JY T: 01392 860677 silvertonadmin@exevalleyfederation.org.uk
Thorverton C of E Primary School School Lane, Thorverton, Devon EX5 5NR T: 01392 860374 thorvertonadmin@exevalleyfederation.org.uk
Whimble Primary School Whimble Devon EX5 2TS T:01404 822584 whimbleadmin@exevalleyfederation.org.uk

Cornwood C of E Primary School School Lane, Cornwood, Devon PL21 9PZ T: 0101752 837375 cornwood@moorsway.devon.sch.uk
Shaugh Prior Primary School Shaugh Prior, Plymouth, Devon PL7 5HA T: 01752 839373 shaughprior@moorsway.devon.sch.uk
The Erme Primary School Station Road, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0AJ T: 01752 892247 theerme@moorsway.devon.sch.uk

The first penalty notice issued will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

The second penalty notice issued will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then court proceedings will be initiated.

I understand the disappointment that the refusal of a leave request may cause and we apologise, but as you can appreciate this policy represents the federation schools' responsibility and commitment towards providing your child's education and supporting their future life opportunities. I hope you will support us by ensuring that your son/daughter obtains the maximum benefit from their time at school by attending punctually for the 190 days each year that the law requires (unless prevented from doing so by unavoidable circumstances).

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

John Jolliffe

John Jolliffe
Executive Principal

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