



# Pound Hill Junior School

## REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING

There are only 190 days in the school year which means that there are 175 non-school days left for holidays, treats and shopping. It is in everybody's interest to avoid the consequences of a child's unlawful extended absence from school and so I hope that this letter gives you the opportunity to think carefully about your decision to take your child/ren out of school during term time.

Name of Child and Class:

Address

Name of person making request

First day of absence:

Date of return to school:

Number of sessions (days X 2):

Return date must be completed in advance.

Why is this absence exceptional?

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

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Religious observation on days officially set apart by the religious body to which the parents belong.

Name of the religious day:

I have read and understood the details overleaf.

Signed:

Date:

NB:

- Absence not authorised by the school will be recorded as 'unauthorised'
- If your child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences (5 or more days) then a referral can be made to West Sussex County Council to consider what further action is appropriate.
- More than 20 days unauthorised absence is likely to result in the loss of a place at this school.

### SCHOOL USE ONLY

Previous sessions authorised absence:

Previous sickness sessions:

Number of sessions authorised:

Number of sessions unauthorised:

Your request to withdraw your children from school during term time has been authorised

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Your request to withdraw your children from school during term time has been denied. I am sure you will appreciate how extended absence from school during term time can seriously disrupt your child/ren's progress. I am reminding you that if you do remove your child/ren during this period, it could potentially be a criminal offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996. On conviction, the penalty can be a fine of up to £2,500 and/or 6 months imprisonment.

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## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

### PLEASE BE AWARE

**IF YOUR CHILD IS AWAY FOR 5 DAYS OR MORE, YOU MAY INCUR A FIXED PENALTY FINE OR BE TAKEN DIRECTLY TO COURT.**

The Government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:
  - promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
  - ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
  - act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school, attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

To enable children to achieve all they are capable of, it is essential that they attend regularly and punctually.

All schools are expected to achieve an overall rate of 95% attendance. It is the responsibility of all school staff to be welcoming to children and their parents, creating an atmosphere where they both feel able to raise concerns and share any information that could affect the children's attendance. Due regard will be given to the fact that a register is a legal document and, taking this into account, registers will be marked regularly and conscientiously at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. The times after which a child is marked late or absent are given in the individual school prospectuses. The local authority recommends that, unless there is prior agreement or good reason, should a pupil arrive more than half an hour late after the registration closes, this should be an unauthorised absence (U). It is important that all children arrive at school punctually. If a child is late, s/he should report to the school office to be marked in and ensure that in case of emergency the school has an accurate head count. It is most important that parents discuss any problem with either the class teacher or the Headteacher so that appropriate help can be offered. Equally, if a child needs to leave school for a medical appointment during school hours s/he must be signed out, and in again on return, at the office. Parents/carers are asked to make every possible effort to make appointments out of school hours.

If a child is absent for the day, the school expects parents/carers to make contact as early as possible, giving the reason for the absence and the expected day of return. If no word is received from the parent/carer the school will contact the parent/carer on that day. The school follows up absences where no reasons are given. If the reasons for these absences remain unspecified they will be classed as unauthorised.

It is the parents' legal responsibility to ensure their child's good school attendance and punctuality. If attendance or punctuality is persistently unsatisfactory, initially the school will liaise with the parent verbally and/or by letter. If your child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences (5 or more days) then a referral can be made to West Sussex County Council to consider what further action is appropriate. If the Council are satisfied that an offence has been committed, then you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice ("FPN") (which could be issued per child, per parent) or alternatively you may not be offered a FPN and instead prosecuted in the magistrates court. Whether you are offered a fine or prosecuted is at the discretion of the County Council.

Parents must state why they consider it *essential* for them to take their child out of school as absence from learning has been proven to adversely affect children's academic progress and could seriously disadvantage them throughout their education.

Unacceptable reasons for absence will be classed as unauthorised. The Headteacher will not authorise absence unless in exceptional circumstances.

Examples of these may be:

- Funeral of an immediate relative – Maximum of 2 days
- Religious observation on days officially set apart by the religious body to which the parents belong – 1 day
- Close family wedding – 1 day

Schools cannot authorise absence except in unavoidable and exceptional circumstances. Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for confirmation from a medical professional if a child's absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. Unacceptable reasons for absence will be classed as unauthorised. Regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, if after ten days the pupil fails to return and no contact can be made with the parents/carers, the school will make a referral to Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI), which will make reasonable enquiries and consult with the Child Missing Education Team (CME). If the school can make contact with the parents/carers, it will warn them, if possible in writing, that it will consider taking the pupil off roll if s/he does not return by an agreed date. If the pupil does not return within 20 days and no reasonable explanation is given, the school will consult with CME and, in line with DfE guidance, consider taking the pupil off roll. If taken off roll, parents/carers would need to reapply for a place through West Sussex County Council Admissions (North) on their return. A place cannot be guaranteed at the current school.

There is no legal entitlement to holidays during term time and this should be avoided if at all possible. It will automatically be classed as unauthorised absence. Parents/carers should be aware that Crawley Schools will follow the WSCC guidelines on issuing FPN and unauthorised absence, i.e. issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) if a child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week period (each half day counts as one absence),

- by non-attendance at school
- by arriving persistently late at school (after registration has closed)
- by parents/carers taking their child on an unauthorised holiday during the school term.

If the Council offer you a Fixed Penalty Notice, it is £120 and should be paid within 28 days. If payment is within 21 days the charge is £60. If the fine is unpaid within that period, then you may be prosecuted for the offence contrary to s444 of the Education Act 1996.

Regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, if it exceeds 20 days and no contact can be made with the parents/carers, the school will make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service and consult with the Child Missing Education Team (CME).

Children should be kept at home if they are ill and genuine illness will be authorised, if the school has been notified by phone on the first day of the absence and by a written explanation on the child's return to school. Medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside the school day will be authorised if the school is notified of them prior to the child attending. The school, however, reserves the right to ask for confirmation from a medical professional if a child's attendance falls below an acceptable level or if the school has any concerns regarding the safety and welfare of a child.