



Moss Park Junior School

Moss Park Road
Stretford
Manchester
M32 9HR

Tel: 0161 864 1710

Fax: 0161 864 1723

Email: mosssparkjun.admin@trafford.gov.uk

Website: www.mosssparkjun.net

Head Teacher: Mrs. K. Stallman, B.Ed.(Hons), NPQH, LLE

Tuesday, 22nd November 2016

Dear Parents and Carers

Following analysis of our 2015/16 academic year absence figures, the Governing Body of our school are exceptionally concerned about the number of pupils being taken out of school for holidays, or family events abroad, in term-time.

From September 2015 to July 2016, almost 30 pupils were taken out of school in term-time for a holiday or family event totalling over 100 days of missed education between them.

Since the start of school in September, a number of pupils have been absent for similar reasons already, totalling approximately 47 days of missed learning between them.

Most of these absences, or the majority of days of the absence, have not been authorised. Our school policy is that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Term time is for learning. Children have 14 weeks off school, every year, for holidays and family events.

At Moss Park Junior School we are aware that, occasionally, exceptional circumstances arise and parents and carers should be aware of the following guidance to Head teachers:

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he/ she is a registered pupil. Failure to fulfil this duty may result in **both** parents being subject to a fixed penalty fine and/or the Local Authority prosecuting the parents.

Absence during term time as a result of term time holidays, interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in school.

At Moss Park Junior School we actively discourage parents from arranging holidays during term time and, following an interview with the Head teacher, an absence will only be authorised in the most exceptional circumstances.



Parents do not have any right or entitlement to expect term time leave to be granted and all leave is granted at the discretion of the Head teacher. If leave is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised absence, which is truancy, and the matter will be referred to the school's Education Welfare Officer.

As a rule, the financial factor (when a parent claims that they are unable to afford a holiday during school holidays when prices may be significantly higher than in term time), does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Similarly, the nature of the proposed holiday is unlikely to be taken as exceptional circumstances, e.g. engagements, family get-togethers or weddings abroad.

The Head teacher in each school reserves the right to make individual judgements as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances, which *might* include the following:

Absence for a bereavement of a close family member (excluding a parent or sibling) is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.

Absence for important, recognised religious observances can be taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time – usually no more than 2 or 3 days, not extended leave.

The needs of families of Service personnel should be taken into account when returning from long, operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled school holiday time.

It is important to note that Head teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether or not the absence is authorised at all. **The Head teacher's decision is final.**

In this school, we try very hard to work in partnership with parents and carers, however, where parents take extended unauthorised leave, or book a holiday in term time without the Head teacher's authorisation, or their child fails to return to school after a school holiday because they have been taken abroad whilst school was closed and the absence accounts for more than 10% of possible attendances (i.e. attendance is less than 90% due to unauthorised absence), a fine will be applied; presently this is £60 per parent per child. If a child does not return from an absence (authorised or unauthorised) on the agreed date, the child's place may be removed from the school roll.

We request that all parents & carers note this information as refusal to authorise holiday or absence in term-time, and the ensuing fine, can cause distress or offence.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Stallman
Head teacher