**Introduction**

Children of school-age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Regular school attendance for a child is a legal requirement of all parents/carers.

There may be occasions when a child has to miss school, for example, if he or she is unwell. There are clear guidelines provided by school as to when and for how long a child should be absent from school for given illnesses.

Any other absences should be kept to an absolute minimum. In particular, parents/carers do not have the right to take their children out of school during term-time in order to go on holiday.

Regulations from September 2013 state that a headteacher ‘*may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances’.*

**Facts about school attendance**

Pupils/students with poor attendance are more likely to become ‘Not in Education, Employment or Training’ (NEET) when they leave school (Department for Education).

· There is a clear link between a child’s poor attendance at school and resulting underachievement across the curriculum.

· Out of pupils/students who miss between 10% and 20% of their primary school education, only 35% achieve 5 A\* to C at GCSE.

· A two week period of absence is over 5% of a child’s school year.

· A child’s absence from school is seen as **significant** if they are absent for **more than 12 days** of the school year (94% attendance) and **persistent** if they are absent for **more than 19 days** of the school year ( 90% attendance.)

**What are “exceptional circumstances”?**

It is the decision of the headteacher as to what might constitute exceptional circumstances.

Each request for any term-time leave will be considered on an individual basis.

 Examples of exceptional circumstance might be:

· Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting.

· Evidence provided by an employer that states leave cannot be accommodated during school holidays without significant consequence.

**Issues parents/carers need to be aware of**

Should a school not agree to grant leave and the parents/carers take their child out of school regardless, **then this will be counted as unauthorised absence**.

**Failure to ensure a child’s attendance at school is an offence under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996.**