



Scammonden Road, Barkisland, Halifax, W. Yorkshire, HX4 0BD  
 Email: [admin@barkisland.calderdale.sch.uk](mailto:admin@barkisland.calderdale.sch.uk)  
 Headteacher: Mrs B. Schofield (B.Ed (Hons)NPQH)

Tel: (01422) 823324  
[www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk](http://www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk)

## **SOWERBY BRIGE CLUSTER OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

### **Cluster Policy for Unauthorised Absence, Holidays, Exceptional Circumstances and Fines**

#### **Unauthorised Absence - Definition**

Unauthorised absence is when a child misses one or more school sessions without a valid reason provided by a parent or carer. The validity is determined by the head teacher and will generally cover medical absences; attendance at external examinations, auditions or sports trials; half day or full day attendances at funerals and weddings of immediate family members or an emergency where a parent has to travel a significant distance and no immediate plans can be made to arrange child care for the rest of the day.

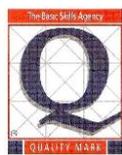
#### **Unauthorised Absence - Frequency**

Absence for any of the above reasons does not automatically mean that the absence will be authorised by the head teacher. If, for example, absences are frequently occurring for medical reasons, auditions, sports trials or even emergency travel, then the absence may not be authorised. Schools have the right to refrain from authorising regular absences for medical reasons unless a senior leader in school decides that a child is unfit to attend; refers them to a school nurse or doctor; or a medical report is obtained from a health professional.

#### **Holidays**

Amendments to the law which came into force 1 September 2013 mean that head teachers may not grant leave of absence for family holidays during term time. Therefore, if a child is absent because of a family holiday all absences in this period must be recorded as unauthorised. However, the head teacher has discretion to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

*Working with the Diocese of Leeds and the Metropolitan Borough of Calderdale*





Scammonden Road, Barkisland, Halifax, W. Yorkshire, HX4 0BD  
 Email: [admin@barkisland.calderdale.sch.uk](mailto:admin@barkisland.calderdale.sch.uk)  
 Headteacher: Mrs B. Schofield (B.Ed (Hons)NPQH)

Tel: (01422) 823324  
[www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk](http://www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk)

## Exceptional Circumstances

Whilst these are at the discretion of the head teacher, cluster schools have agreed the following guidelines in consultation with the Education Welfare Service with due regard to national guidance and judgements from local legal “test” cases. Schools in Sowerby Bridge may grant leave of absence in the following circumstances;

- Critical illness in the immediate family
- When a parent is home on leave from the armed forces
- Where a parent produces a bona fide letter from an employer which states that the parent can only take holiday leave between specific dates throughout the year
- Where siblings are in schools with different holiday times
- A maximum of 3 days for a family wedding abroad of a close family member (including a day to travel each way). Anything more would be looked upon as a holiday.
- A maximum 1 day for a family wedding or funeral of a close family member in the UK. Where a parent is getting married, recent test cases have suggested that either parent knows a child should legally be in school and therefore should make wedding arrangements within school holiday periods.

## Fines

Cluster schools may refer pupils with unauthorised holidays to the LA Education Welfare Service so that a fine is issued to parents unless the child’s attendance is at 95% or above in any typical year.

October 2015

*Working with the Diocese of Leeds and the Metropolitan Borough of Calderdale*

