



HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

I have no wish to be seen as the “grouchy” Principal who will not allow you to go on holiday, however pupil registration is mandatory in all sectors of education, including the Independent sector.

I am advised that any absence for longer than 10 days in term time must be notified to the local Education Welfare officer.

It is clear from our current registration information that the total amount of holiday leave granted at Hurst Lodge is not causing undue concern. I also believe that some of the longer, far away trips of a lifetime can be of considerable educational advantage and help in the personal growth in confidence of an individual pupil.

‘The Head’s Legal Guide to Attendance and Absence, 1998’ states:

“The amount of time off which children have for holidays in term time is a matter of considerable concern. In many schools it amounts to as many authorised absences as are accounted for by illness. There is a general assumption amongst many, school staff and parents that such requests must be allowed automatically. However **this is not** the case. It should be common practice in every school to spell out exactly on what grounds authorisation will be given or refused. All leave for holidays in term time is discretionary, not an automatic entitlement”.

Below you will see the expectations set out for Hurst Lodge students:

- Parents are expected to request for leave of absence in advance of any such holiday being booked. Requests for leave of absence are recommended to be for no more than 1 week of duration.
- I will attempt to reply promptly and within no longer than a week to any request for leave of absence.
- Leave of absence will not normally be given for the first or last week of any term. I sometimes hear that “the first week is only for sorting things out and the last week is just fun stuff” Much of our best academic and pastoral work involves gearing up our pupils for the work of the term, setting clear expectations and celebrating the success of their efforts in the company of their peers. In addition, many of our musical and dramatic productions take place at this time.
- Leave of absence will not usually be given to pupils in Year 10, 11, 12 and 13. In addition, no holiday leave of absence will be given during the weeks of school examinations and public exams such as GCSE or A level.

- Leave of absence is unlikely to be approved for a pupil who already has had a significant amount of time off school in the academic year for medical or other reasons.
- Unauthorised absence is very rare here. However, such unauthorised absences are recorded formally and form part of the summative report and assessment of a pupil when they leave the school. In addition, it is a mandatory requirement of the school to contact the Local Education Welfare officer should they have concerns with regard to matters of attendance.

I hope that these expectations are helpful in framing our general views on the matter of holiday leave.

Victoria Smit

Victoria Smit
Principal

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