



BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL
POLICY FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE BY A PUPIL

This is a Senior School policy

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Action	Responsibility	Date
Reviewed	Headmaster (ACJ)	January 2018
Next Review	Headmaster	January 2019

Barnard Castle School strongly discourages pupils from taking any Leave of Absence during term-time and does not support any holiday being taken which leads to even one day of term-time being missed. To give parents every opportunity of avoiding clashes between a holiday and term-time, the term dates for an academic year are published at least twelve months in advance. However, if there seems to be a genuine need for an individual to have Leave of Absence, it is important that the correct procedures are followed. Leave of Absence must be requested for a pupil to miss any school commitment, not just teaching time.

BACKGROUND OF POLICY

Parents and pupils must be aware that any absence from a lesson:

- disrupts the progress of the absentee, missed work rarely being fully recovered or consolidated;
- interferes with the progress of other pupils who may be paired with the absentee for practical or group work;
- interferes with the progress of the whole class whilst the absentee tries to catch up after returning;
- lets down sports teams when fixtures have been scheduled;
- puts additional pressure on the teacher / sports coach.

It is essential that permission is sought in advance for a pupil to miss not only lessons, but any school commitment, however trivial that commitment might appear to be, as an individual's absence will have an impact on others.

PROCEDURE FOR SEEKING LEAVE OF ABSENCE

If there is a need to seek leave of absence, the procedure described below should be followed:

- The request for a Leave of Absence (via letter or e-mail) should be submitted to the Headmaster.
- The request for a Leave of Absence should be made before any arrangements are finalised (to issue us with a 'fait accompli' is not acceptable).
- When contact is made, the following information should be provided: the dates and precise timings of the proposed absence from school together with a clear reason for the request.

If the absence from school will provide a clear educational benefit for the pupil, its chances of being authorised are more likely, but certainly not guaranteed. Although absence on medical grounds will be supported, routine dental or optical appointments should be booked in the school holidays.

The Headmaster will refer to our guidelines and those issued by the Department for Education. He will also consult all interested parties before deciding whether the requested absence can be authorised. Parents will receive a response usually within five working days of the School receiving the request.

EXCEPTIONS FOR THE SIXTH FORM

Although students do need to attend some university open days and make work-experience related visits, their first priority under most circumstances is to be in school.

University Open Days

Students are encouraged to use holidays, exeats and the post-AS exam period to make as many open day visits as possible.

Post-Application Days

Once a student has made his or her application (which is to 5 institutions), most universities will invite them to a post-application information day. These are generally of great benefit

to the students and therefore we encourage attendance at each of these. Parents should contact the Headmaster via letter or email for Leave of Absence to attend.

Interviews

Some universities will require students to attend interviews. The school fully supports this and will usually conduct practice interviews with the student beforehand. Again we ask that parents confirm their son or daughter's interview details with the Headmaster.

Work-related Absences

Sometimes students will wish to attend interviews or work-experience related interviews or visits. All requests will be treated individually and according to their merit. As a general rule we strongly encourage students to gain work experience but these must always be balanced with their needs in the classroom.

Driving Tests and Lessons

Driving lessons should not be arranged during school time or to coincide with extra-curricular commitments. The practical driving test is not usually negotiable with the DVLA and so students will be authorised to attend. The theory test should be booked at a time when disruption to lessons is kept to a minimum; in both cases students should bring in a supporting letter from home.