MATTHEW ARNOLD SCHOOL

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Request for Leave of Absence

Parents/carers should not book a family holiday in term time. You may think this is beneficial but taking a holiday during term time means that children miss important school time and it will be difficult for them to catch up on work later on. Before completing a request for absence, we ask you to consider carefully the effect on your child's education. School attendance is vital to success. If a student has, for example, 90% attendance this means that they have missed 19 days, or four weeks of school during the year and even 95% attendance means two weeks of school missed in a year. The Government defines attendance of less than 90% to be persistent absenteeism.

The law makes clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The Headteacher does not have to authorise the absence and, if leave is granted, will determine the number of school days a student can be away from school. Each request will be considered in the light of the individual circumstances. When considering applications for absence we will firstly consider your child's attendance. We will use the **attendance figure of 95%** as our benchmark figure.

Exceptional circumstances are defined as circumstances which are **rare** (unlikely to happen ever again in the child's time in school)**, significant, unavoidable and short.**
Some examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave *may* be granted during term time are as follows:

- Out of school programmes or events such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement or competition such as at County or National level. Documentary evidence of the event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states that absence may be authorised, ''on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs''.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; leave will only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there will be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance.
- Short (part-day) absences for unavoidable events such as external music examinations will be considered

If there are special reasons why you need to take your child out of school, you should complete this form at least 14 days before the planned absence, giving as much detail as possible and return it to the School's Attendance Officer (email: attendance@maschool.org.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Mr Anthony Broadley, Headteacher

To: **Attendance Officer - Matthew Arnold School (email: attendance@maschool.org.uk)**

I would like to request permission for leave of absence to be granted to:

Student name……..…….... Tutor group……

First day of absence
……..……..

Day returning to school
……..…….

Number of school days absent
……..……...

Signature of parent/guardian ……..….. Date ……..…….…….

PLEASE NOTE:

1. Under The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 absence for purpose of holiday is only **authorised** if request is granted before the holiday commences.
2. Failure to request leave or refusal to grant leave will mean the absence is **unauthorised**.
3. When considering granting leave of absence in term time, the school considers
    a. student's attendance record – above 95%
    b. impact on the student's education
    c. duration of the proposed absence
    d. family circumstances
    e. Headteachers may not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances
4. Please return this form to the Attendance Officer **at least 14 days before the planned absence.** (Email: attendance@maschool.org.uk)

FOR SCHOOL USE

Student's % attendance this year: …….
Student's unauthorised absence this year: …….
Student's authorised absence this year: …….

LEAVE AUTHORISED / UNAUTHORISED

Headteacher: ……. Date: ……..…