

March 2023



Dear Parent / Carer,

Absence due to unauthorised leave taken during term time is a significant issue for all Bradford schools. Children in Bradford are twice more likely to be absent due to unauthorised leave during term time than the average child in England, with absence due to unauthorised leave during term time representing the third highest reason for absence behind illness and general unauthorised absence. In the 2021-2022 academic year, children missed almost 150,000 days of school in Bradford due to unauthorised leave taken during term time.

Absence due to unauthorised leave during term time covers a variety of reasons for absence, including holidays during term time and travel to other countries to visit family and attend celebrations and events. Currently schools can request a penalty notice from Bradford Council for each child, and each parent, where unauthorised leave takes place. Despite this, absence due to unauthorised leave during term time continues to take place, with a significant number of families taking more than one period of absence during an academic year, or taking a period of leave of four weeks or more.

A decision has been made by Bradford Council to change their approach to situations where families take one or more periods of unauthorised leave, or a period of four or more weeks of leave are taken. In these instances, Bradford Council will utilise the option to start legal proceedings via the magistrates' court, instead of issuing a penalty notice. This means that parents may be liable to receive a significantly higher fine (up to **£2,500 per child, per parent**) if found guilty, as well as receive a criminal record, which may be reportable to employers (for example, via a DBS Check). In rare circumstances, magistrates can consider a custodial sentence for up to 3 months. This change will come into force from 1st April 2023.

One In A Million Free School strives for excellence in all aspects of our school including Attendance. Attending school on a regular basis is key to your child achieving their full academic potential. It is also beneficial to mental health and well-being because it: establishes good routines and provides opportunities to socialise and increase confidence.

Attendance of 90% is the equivalent of 19 days of school absence over the academic year. On average those students who did not achieve grades 9 to 4 in English and Maths were found to have an attendance rate of 91.2% or below.

Evidence shows that continued absence from school will have a detrimental impact on your child's academic attainment, therefore I wish to make you aware that for this

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A: One In A Million Free School, Cliffe Terrace, Bradford, BD8 7DX

T: 01274 723439, E: school@oneinamillion.org.uk W: oiam.org/freeschool

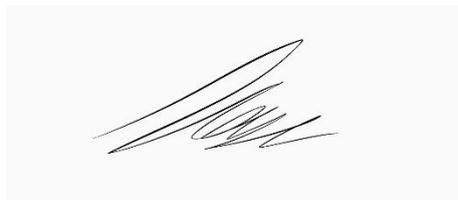
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reason we support the decision of Bradford Council. It is important that you are aware of this change so that you can take the information into consideration when deciding whether or not to take a period of unauthorised leave during term time.
Kind Regards.



Jane Hobbs
Acting Principal



John Leese
Education Safeguarding Service Manager
Attendance, Prosecutions and Child
Licensing
**City of Bradford Metropolitan District
Council**

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