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# Policy on Pupil Absence

September 2024

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Pardes House  
Primary School

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Headteacher: Rabbi J Sager

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## **POLICY ON PUPIL ABSENCES**

**At Pardes House, the regular attendance of each and every child is of absolute importance and taken seriously by the school.**

**Regular attendance at school is the surest way for children to keep up with their learning and to help them develop self-discipline, good habits and important life skills.**

### **Rationale**

- Pardes House Primary School is full of Simcha (family celebrations).
- We are also aware that many of these Simchas take place in other parts of the country and abroad.
- Pardes House will always do its best to support families in these circumstances, where leave from school is applied for. It must be noted that in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, there are limits to what the school can and will agree to.

### **Introduction**

- Pardes House expects all parents to support the school and their children by ensuring their sons are present in school every day, as dictated by law for children aged 5+ (*see 'Attendance and Punctuality Policy' and 'Children Missing School Policy'*).
- It is the policy of Pardes House Primary School that the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless he considers there to be "exceptional circumstances" for doing so. If leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a child can be away from school.
- The school will consider each request individually, taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advanced notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

### **Authorised and unauthorised absences**

- Requests for Leave **MUST** be made in writing to the Headteacher, giving as much notice as possible (minimum of 2 weeks suggested) and certainly not after the event or after flight tickets are booked.
- Absence requests are to be made only through an online absence request form; further information on this available from school office if required.
- Absences that are authorised will be signed off by the Headteacher on the 'Pupil Absence Request' form (*see Appendix*).
- If a request for absence is not authorised, the school will expect to see that pupil in school on the days the absence had been requested for. If the absence is taken without

formal permission from the Headteacher, this is deemed to be an unauthorised absence. More detail follows.

- It is always the Headteacher's decision whether or not to allow you to take your child out of school during term time. If you do not ask their permission, or they do not give it and you take your child out of school anyway, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and will appear on the pupil's school record (*see Appendix for unauthorised absence letters*). Absences will usually be deemed unauthorised in the following situations:
  - Celebrating birthdays;
  - Shopping;
  - Being at home with guests/family from abroad (unless the circumstances are deemed by the Headteacher to be exceptional);
  - Family holidays;
  - Where no explanation is given;
  - Where no request is made in advance;
  - Where a request is made in advance but permission is not given.
- Parents cannot authorise absences themselves. It is only the Headteacher that decides whether the reason for absence is acceptable and only he can give permission for an absence and this can only be given in advance of the planned absence.
- *Contrary to common myth, parents are NOT entitled to take their children out of school for up to 10 days a year.*

### **Exceptional circumstances**

- In general, 'exceptional circumstances' will be defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.
- Greater detail of the exceptional circumstances leave is granted for is outlined below

### **Exceptional circumstances defined**

#### ***Chasanahs***

- If they have a Chasanah and Sheva Brochos week of a parent's brother or sister abroad or their own brother or sister, up to 8 days will be authorised (including Sundays and other Cheder days). Please note that if the family returns to London for local Sheva Brochos, the pupil must return to school.
- If they have a Chasanah of a parent's brother or sister or their own brother or sister in Manchester or Gateshead or Skegness, the same rules apply for a Chasanah abroad, mentioned just above. Please note that if the family returns to London for local Sheva Brochos, the pupil must return to school.
- If they have a Chasanah of a parent's brother or sister or their own brother or sister in London, up to half a day will be allowed, from 1.45pm.
- For any other Chasanahs, absence will only be authorised for up to an hour before the Chasanah and we need to see the invitation first.

### ***Bar mitzvahs***

- If they have a Bar Mitzvah of a parent's brother or sister's son or their own brother or sister abroad, up to 5 days (including Sundays and other Cheder days) will be authorised.
- If they have a Bar Mitzvah of a parent's brother or sister's son or their own brother or sister in Manchester or Gateshead or Blackburn, the same rules apply as a Bar Mitzvah abroad, mentioned just above.

### ***Other family simchas***

- We of course always want to support the Simchas taking place in our school families but these still need to be authorised beforehand. This also includes absence requests for engagements etc

### ***Shiva***

- Where there is a shiva in the immediate family, a pupil may be absent from school for a period of time, but must be agreed with the Headteacher.

### ***Other requests for authorised absence***

- Requests for pupil absence, outside of the reasons defined above will be judged on a case-by-case basis, taking into account reason for the request, notice given, length of absence request and likely impact on pupil's education.

### **Other**

#### ***Sundays and kodesh days***

- It is important to note that at Pardes House Primary School, Sundays and Kodesh days are just as compulsory as any other day, including attendance, uniform etc.
- The importance of attendance of these days throughout the school year cannot be stressed highly enough.

#### ***Pupil illness***

- If a child is ill, we will require a note on their return to school, explaining that absence.
- If there are frequent bouts of illness, we may require a written report from the child's GP.
- If the authenticity of an illness is in doubt, we may ask parents to provide medical evidence to support it. This medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc.

**\* It is of the utmost importance to note that Leave in term-time which results in significant absence from school is disruptive to the child's education and has a detrimental impact on attainment. There is no automatic right to any leave or holiday in term time.**

**The regulations clearly make the point that the Headteacher has the final decision as to whether to authorise the absence or not. Unauthorised absences will be responded to in the strongest terms.**