Only the Headteacher can authorise absence from school. Absences will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

**Part 1: to be completed by the parent/carer and sent to school a full 2 weeks before the first date of absence.** Please email to [admin@bristolfreeschool.org.uk](mailto:admin@bristolfreeschool.org.uk)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Student name |  | |
| Tutor Group |  | |
| Reason for absence  *(please continue on another sheet if necessary)* |  | |
| First date of absence |  | |
| Last date of absence |  | |
| Number of school days’ absence requested |  | |
| **Name and address of parent /carer:** | | **Signed:** | |
| **Print Name:** | |
| **Date:** | |

Bristol Free School will consider every application individually; policy is NOT to grant leave of absence other than in the most exceptional circumstances as judged by the Headteacher.

**1. Applications**

An application must be made in writing **two weeks** in advance, with **appropriate evidence**, in advance of any intended absence by the parent/carer. **All parties marked as having parental consent on the school management system must agree to the leave. If parties with parental consent cannot agree, the case may be referred to Bristol City Council Social Care to arbitrate. Bristol Free School will only be able to stop a party with parental consent removing their child from school if there is a court order in place. All parties with an email address and parental consent marked on the school management system will receive confirmation of the leave request decision.** Bristol Free School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing by email.

Requests for absence for the following reasons will not be authorised:

* Holidays;
* Leisure activities;
* More than one day of a religious festival;

**2. School Work**

Whether the leave of absence is granted or not, there will be an expectation that the student undertakes some school-set work during this period. It is the student’s responsibility to collect appropriate work to complete.

**3. Safeguarding and Extended Leave**

For any request for extended absence, parents/carers may be invited to a pre-absence meeting to discuss our duty to safeguard students who are leaving the country for extended periods of time.

**4. Penalty Notices and Prosecution**

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child(ren) attend school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (amended regulations 2013) to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the academy. Legal interventions may be used for ten or more sessions (with one day being two sessions) of absence over a ten-week period, or for repeated instances of unauthorised absence below this threshold. A **Penalty Notice** may be requested if a student has unauthorised absences. **In cases where a penalty notice has been issued previously and/or there is a persistent failure to secure good attendance, we may request that the Local Authority supports us in a criminal prosecution of the parents.**