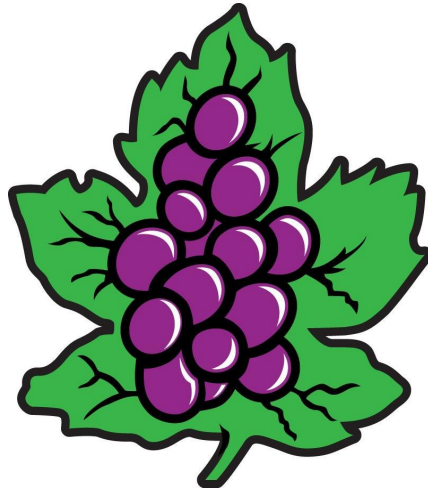
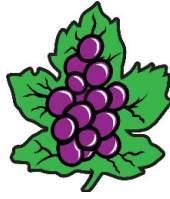




PUPIL ABSENCE POLICY

Kerem School

Approved by:	Compliance Committee	Written: October 2019
Last reviewed on:	August 2026	Next review due by: August 2027



KEREM SCHOOL

(This policy also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage)

Pupil Absence Policy

Introduction

- This Policy concerns requests by parents for their children to be absent from school during term time.
- The School seeks to structure its term dates to balance: (a) the need to have a sufficient number of teaching days to cover the curriculum, both secular and religious; (b) Chagim; and (c) ordinary school holidays. The school is closed over Pesach, but may be open or closed over Succot.
- Traditionally, the most common reason for taking children out of school is to have longer foreign holidays (even though Kerem has longer holidays than state-maintained schools) or to attend a family 'simcha' (celebration).

Rationale

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence, and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away during school time. We believe that taking children out of school during term time can be problematic for the following reasons:

- It impacts the children's learning and can lead to pupils falling behind in certain subjects.
- It can impact the mental health of children.
- It imposes a significant additional burden on teachers. On the assumption that parents will want their children to catch up with lost work, that involves either: (a) teachers having to repeat lessons in class, which is clearly unsatisfactory for all other children who have not missed lessons; or (b) teachers making the time outside class to help children catch up.
- It is disruptive for other children.
- It does not promote a culture of respect for the school.

Our Policy

Under the Policy, each time a parent wishes to take their child out of school during term time, a written request, using the school Pupil Absence Request Form (which can be found on the school website or through this [Link](#)), must be made to the Head Teacher, via the school office. Requests should not be made to other staff members. A separate form must be completed for each child in the family.

Children will not be authorised to take time away from school during term time, save in **exceptional circumstances**. (Exceptional circumstances do not include a desire to take a longer family holiday; nor will the fact that siblings in other schools have different term dates be an exceptional reason justifying absence from Kerem.)

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sports operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- To attend a simcha (wedding, barmitzvah, batmitzvah) of a close family member may amount to exceptional circumstances, provided:
 - (a) The additional time is genuinely to attend the simcha itself and is not extended to plan a holiday around the simcha;
 - (b) Proof of the simcha (e.g. an invitation) is provided when the request is made to the Head Teacher so that the School can keep a proper record of the reason for the absence.
- To attend the funeral of a close relative
- In years when the School is open over Succot, the School will take into account a family's desire to spend the chag together, in a religious Jewish atmosphere, but that approach is limited to the chag itself and is not the basis for an extended holiday.
- In difficult family situations or where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside the above, the Headteacher may use their discretion in granting leave, and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

When considering exceptional term-time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional term-time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parents/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school, e.g. wrapping around the school holiday
- Whether alternative care arrangements have been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school

- The impact on any interventions, assessments, or referrals being undertaken with the child or family, e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.
- Whether it falls within the time of any school assessments.

Parents who seek permission to take their children out of school for reasons that do not appear to be exceptional will be invited to meet the Head Teacher to explain their request so that it can be considered further.

If parents take a child out of school without the Head Teacher's permission, that will be regarded as an "unauthorised absence" on the child's school record.

The school will continue to monitor compliance with the policy. In line with Government recommendations, governors may introduce a system of financial sanctions for unauthorised absences, based on a sum per child per day, to be added to the following term's bill.