



## Leave of Absence Questions

### I am planning to take my child out of school during term time what should I do?

You must complete a Leave of Absence Request form (available from the office or the school website) for the Headteacher, Mrs Peck.

### Will the leave be authorised?

Only in exceptional circumstances. The nature of the words *exceptional circumstances* are such that they indicate **unusual events** or an **abnormal occurrence**. It is therefore not possible to define in advance when a request will or will not be exceptional.

### How do I decide whether my request is exceptional?

The following 'rule of thumb' may be helpful in considering a request for a leave of absence:

#### ***Could the leave take place during the normal school holidays?***

If the answer is *yes* then it is not an exceptional circumstance.

The Department for Education is clear that there is no parental/carer right for a family holiday: cost, experiences for the child, weather and overlapping with school holidays are not factors on which the decision should be made.

Even if it your request is an 'exceptional circumstance' the Headteacher will also still need to take into consideration the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling; followed by the frequency of the requests before authorising the request. The Headteacher does not have to approve leave of absence even if the reason given is exceptional.

### What are examples of exceptional/non-exceptional circumstances?

Exceptional Circumstances	Non-Exceptional Circumstances
The death of a close relative	Family Holiday

Attendance at a funeral	Birthdays
Respite care of a looked after child	Shopping Trips
A housing crisis	Parent's work commitments (except in some Armed Forces workers cases)
A religious observance	Minor Illnesses
Absence recommended by a health professional	Trips abroad to visit family
Serious illness or hospital treatment	
Regional, national or international sporting events	

### **Will all of the requested number of days be approved if the leave is deemed to be exceptional?**

If a leave of absence is approved, the Headteacher will also consider the number of days they are able to authorise. The minimum reasonable number of days for the request is likely to be approved. For example, approval is likely to be given for an immediate family wedding but, depending on the location of the wedding, the number of days approved for travelling may be reduced.

### **What happens if the leave is not approved?**

If the leave is for 5 days or longer then you will receive a letter explaining that you are at risk of a penalty notice or prosecution from the Local Authority. This may mean that you may have to pay a fine of **£160 per child per parent**. If the leave is for 15 or more school days then this may lead to prosecution.

### **What happens if I take my child on holiday or out of school without completing a Leave of Absence Request form?**

This will automatically class the leave as 'unauthorised' and the Local Authority may issue a fine or prosecute.

### **Does the school get the money from the fine?**

No. The fines are issued by the Local Authority and are used to cover the administrative costs of issuing and collecting penalty notices. They are also used to support attendance support services to help improve attendance and support families.