

Local Authority Leave of Absence Policy

"Missing school for any reason can deprive a child of educational opportunities and hamper their progress at school. Children have a right to an education and, by denying children their rights, can have a long-lasting effect on ensuring children meet their true potential. There is a strong correlation between good school attendance and academic achievement.

Nationally, Government Policy is insisting that schools minimise the amount of teaching and learning time lost as a result of term-time holidays and schools are now expected to adopt a more challenging response to requests for leave of absence for holidays in term time.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the accompanying guidance make it clear that parents/carers **do not** have legal right to take their child out of school for holidays in term time.

There are 190 statutory school days a year, so there are 175 other days available for holidays that would not have a negative effect on a child's education. By taking a child on holiday in term time, they may be getting an unspoken message that school is not important.

Leave of absence requests for the following reasons are **not** considered to be **special or exceptional**:

- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements.
- Poor weather experienced in holiday periods.
- Overlapping with beginning or end of term.

Leave of absence may be granted in **special or exceptional** circumstances only at the Head Teacher's discretion. Requests for leave of absence should be sent to the school no less than 4 weeks prior to the start of the period of absence. Failure to fill in a leave of absence request form may result in legal sanctions being taken against the parent(s).

Schools will consider:

- How long is it for and how much will it disrupt the child's education.
- The overall attendance record of the child.
- The nature of the circumstance, such as trauma or death within the immediate family where an immediate holiday may help the child deal better with the situation.
- Previous similar requests.

Schools should not, as a rule, grant leave:

- If a child's attendance record is less than 95%
- If the period coincides with the start of term, or is near to, or coincides with in-school tests, SATs, GCSEs or other significant events on the school calendar.
- If there are patterns of non-attendance or if there is Education Welfare Service (EWS) involvement.
- If the school have concerns over a child's welfare and safety.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will work in partnership with the school to ensure that if parents take a child out of school during term time without the Head Teachers' permission the EWO will conduct an investigation, which may lead to parents receiving a penalty notice."