

Holidays in term time: guidance on authorisation of absence from school in exceptional circumstances

The head teacher will only authorise pupil absence in term time in the most **exceptional** of circumstances. The decision to authorise the absence or not is the decision of the head teacher at the school where the pupil is registered.

Parents should make an application for a leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday to the head teacher of their child's school. It is important that the parents provide any supporting documentation to support the request is **exceptional** at the point of application as authorisation of absences will not be amended retrospectively.

Parents will be informed in writing of the head teacher's decision and each parent will receive a warning letter from the head teacher for each child outlining the legal framework and consequences should leave be taken without the consent of the head teacher.

All requests will be considered on an individual basis as circumstances in light of the reasons and evidence the parent provides at the time of the request. Reasons that may be considered as exceptional circumstances include:

- Medical advice from a health professional that states the parent, child or sibling has a special educational need and taking a holiday in term time is advisable.
- Armed forces personnel who have returned from a tour of duty and leave does not coincide with school holidays.

School may wish to devise their own more comprehensive list to support their families in understanding what and is not exceptional in their context.

Evidence must be provided in all cases and documentation should be presented on official letterhead paper when from an employer or health care professional, including the name of the organisation and a named contact person.

Parents should be aware that providing evidence will not automatically guarantee that a request is agreed.

The Local Authority Attendance Manager can, if requested, provide support to the head teacher about decision making and exceptional circumstances.