



LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

- It is important that children attend school regularly if they are to benefit from the learning opportunities provided.
- Children who are absent from school due to leave of absence in term time will miss out on important learning.
- The time teachers have to help children in a class is reduced if they spend time helping a child catch up after a period of leave of absence
- Educational experiences in school missed as a result of an absence cannot be re-captured later.
- If a child does not attend school regularly they will not be able to keep up with the work. This has a serious impact on opportunities later in life.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Following changes to the Pupil Registration Regulation in September 2013 Headteachers will only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. It is for school to decide what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances' and apply this consistently

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent(s), carer(s) or corporate parent that the pupil normally resides with and Children's Services have provided schools with a standard 'Leave of Absence Request Form'.

Schools' discretion around leave of absence is far-reaching. They are able to refuse the whole period requested by a pupil's parents, grant part of the period and refuse the remainder, or grant the whole of the period requested if it is felt that exceptional circumstances exist. Any leave of absence granted by a school must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate absence code. Periods that are refused must be recorded as unauthorised.

All requests should be treated on a case by case basis within the school's published attendance policies which should give it the flexibility to respond to difficult circumstances whilst discouraging unnecessary absence.

It is good practice for schools to respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision. It is particularly important that letters approving a request clearly state: the number of days of absence the school are prepared to authorise and the expected date of return;

- that the parents are expected to contact the school if anything delays the pupil returning to school when expected; and
- what action will be taken if the pupil fails to return when expected
- Similarly, a letter refusing a request should explain the reasons for the refusal and what action will be taken if the parents ignore the refusal and keep their child away.