

Leave of Absence during Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 state that leave of absence shall not be granted unless:

- an application has been made in advance to the head teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; **and**
- the head teacher, or a person authorised by the head teacher, considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application.

This policy clarifies:

- there is no entitlement in law for parents to take their child on authorised leave of absence during term-time without obtaining prior approval from the school.
- the procedures to be followed whereby parents/carers can make applications for their child to be granted discretionary leave of absence during term-time.
- that each application will be considered by head teachers according to the individual circumstances surrounding the request. Head teachers determine the number of days, if any, a child can be away from school.
- the sorts of 'exceptional circumstances' which may warrant the head teacher granting discretionary leave of absence.

Examples of exceptional circumstances which could justify approval include:

- members of the armed forces who are returning home from active duties.
- parents / carers who are unable to take leave at certain times of the year (and can evidence that this is the case) e.g. emergency services personnel.
- the death of an immediate family member, e.g. parent, sibling or grandparent.
- an extended family that wishes to spend time together for support during a time of acute crisis.
- families who can evidence that they have experienced genuine disruption to their originally agreed return travel plans, e.g. severe weather conditions or civil unrest.

Education Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Leave of Absence during Term Time

Headteachers should write to the parents/carers to confirm whether or not their request for leave of absence has been approved. In cases where a request for leave has not been approved, parents should be informed that they face the possibility of being issued with penalty notices for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school should they go ahead with their plans.

However, it may not always be possible to issue warning letters in advance of leave of absence in instances where leave of absence is either not requested by parents, or requested with insufficient notice for a warning letter to be sent.

In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence, but that pupil then fails to return to school within 5 school days (10 sessions) of the agreed return date, a request to issue penalty notices to the parents can be made to Wirral Attendance Service (unless the school is satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause).

Parents should also be advised that if their child fails to return to school within 10 school days of the given return date, and joint enquiries made by school and the authority have failed to

locate the child's whereabouts, they run the risk of their child's name being removed from the school roll, with no guarantee of re-admission. Prior to removal of a pupil's name from the school's admissions register, school should discuss the pupil's individual circumstances with their named Locality Attendance Officer or the CME Officer at Wirral Attendance Service. School and the Local Authority are jointly responsible for making all reasonable enquiries to locate a missing pupil prior to removal from roll.