



ATTENDANCE & HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME POLICY

**This Policy was developed by
Coventry City Council and adopted by the
Governing Body as a school policy
December 2017**



Coventry City Council Policy On Request For Exceptional Leave in Term Time

Introduction, Law and Regulations

Regulation 12 of the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations 1981, states that schools have the discretionary power to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances during term time. This permission is only granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school and only in the most exceptional circumstances should this be granted for more than 10 school days in any one year. Parents and guardians do not have the automatic right to take authorised holiday.

If your request is authorised, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed school work. This is your responsibility and school are not obliged to provide work for your child to complete under such circumstances

Permission must be given in advance of the exceptional leave after agreed procedures have been followed.

The law states that leave of absence granted for the purpose of a holiday should only be requested by the parent with whom the child normally resides. Only in exceptional circumstances may the amount granted exceed more than two weeks in any school year.

Good consistent school attendance is regarded as essential in securing the desired outcomes for children as itemised in 'Every Child Matters' and is crucial in ensuring that pupils have the best chance of success.

The Government's own guidance on the issue of term-time holidays states:

'Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday during term-time'.

If a parent takes a pupil on holiday in term-time without the Head Teacher's permission, or if a child fails to return from holiday by the agreed date, this should be recorded as unauthorised on the pupil's school attendance record. If a pupil has not returned to school within 10 school days of the expected agreed date of return, the Head Teacher may take the pupil off roll, providing the correct procedure has been followed - (*see section 'Removing Pupils From Roll'*)

*** September 2013**

This guidance reflects the changes to the Pupil Registration Regulations which came into force from September 2013

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

It is for headteachers to determine if the requests for leave of absence are reasonable. Each request should be judged on a case by case basis, and we expect that head teachers will use their discretion sparingly



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Under the Code, Penalty Notices may be issued:

- If parents have not sought permission from the headteacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term-time;
- If the headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway;
- If a pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation and the pupil remains on the roll of the school. (Penalty Notices cannot be issued when a child has been removed from roll)

AND

- Where the absence has been recorded by the school as unauthorised in the attendance register on at least 10 sessions (5 school days).
- Penalty Notices will not be issued for term-time holiday with less than 5 days (10 sessions) unauthorised absence.
- Penalty Notices cannot be issued if the parents are known to be out of the country
- Penalty Notices cannot be issued against the parents of children who are not of statutory school age
- The Penalty Notice is for £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days.

Unauthorised absence (truancy)

- The law states that parent/carer(s) must ensure that their child regularly attends the school where they are registered. Should your child fail to attend school regularly legal action may be taken against you.
- Once a child is registered in school, attendance is compulsory until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which the child turns 16 (Year 11). It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child, when of statutory school age, accesses education appropriate to age, needs and ability.

Under the terms of the education related provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, parent/carer(s) may be issued with a Penalty Notice of £60 if:

- You fail to ensure that your child attends school, or other education provision regularly
- You allow your child to take leave of absence in term time without a school's authorisation
- Your fail to return your child to school on an agreed date after a leave of absence
- Your child is found out of school, without permission, on two Truancy Sweeps, within the same school year



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•Your child persistently arrives late for school after the register is closed

Schools

In setting school procedures and a school policy on leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, we consider the following: -

- The pupil's overall attendance pattern
- Holidays already taken in the same school year.
- The child's stage of education.
- The ability of the child to catch up on the work they have missed.
- Time and duration of the leave.
- Proximity to end of key stage assessments (Y2 and Y6) and GCSE exams and course work deadlines.
- The reasons for taking leave in term-time which could include;
 - I. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
 - II. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
 - III. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
 - IV. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
 - V. Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave by their employer.
 - VI. Whether the leave is in the child's best interest.

We use a 'request for exceptional leave in term time' form that reflects the considerations above and that parents/carers understand the consequences of taking holidays in term-time without permission. (This could include the issue of Penalty Notices or removal from roll in the case of unauthorised extended holidays)

Procedures to be followed when requests for exceptional leave in term-time are made are outlined below.

- 1 A formal request form to be provided to parents for completion a minimum of two weeks prior to their leave and an accompanying information leaflet detailing concerns over Exceptional Leave In Term Time.
- 2 The form to be returned to a named person: section 7(1) The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 states 'Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school'.
- 3 Authorisation to be refused or approved by the named person mentioned above.
- 4 Parents may be invited into school to discuss the request within 5 working days of the request being made. Parents should be made aware of the possible consequences of unauthorised leave.
- 5 Following a decision about authorisation, those responsible for the pupil's registration to be informed of the correct code to use: H, F or G
- 6 If the absence is to be unauthorised, consideration should be given to a Penalty Notice application and/or a referral to Education Welfare Service or removal from roll if the conditions for this are met.



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- 7 If your request is not authorised, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed school work. This is your responsibility and school are not obliged to provide work for your child to complete under such circumstances
- 8 Exceptional Leave In Term Time Request form to be retained on the child's school file.

Extended Holidays Overseas

It is recommended that schools ensure that all parents are aware of their policy on extended absence. In the case of families recently arrived in Britain, special care should be taken to ensure that the policy has been clearly explained and understood, taking into account that the parents' first language may not be English and they may be unfamiliar with the education system in this country. Parents should be encouraged to time their leave to overlap official school holidays.

Parents should be made aware that if a request for leave in exceptional circumstances is more than 10 days to visit family overseas, the authorisation of this is at the head teacher's discretion and will take into account the educational needs and stage of the child. This extended leave must be discussed with the Head teacher. The Head Teacher should stress the educational impact that a period of extended leave will have on the pupil. It must be made clear to parents that if the leave is not authorised this could result in, a Penalty Notice being issued or the pupil being removed from roll if they have not returned to school within 10 school days of the agreed date.

Information for parents

The City Council recommends that the following information should be communicated to parents at least annually:

- Leave in term time can **seriously** disrupt a child's continuity of learning.
- Leave in term time can result in **gaps in a pupil's learning.**
- Leave in term time can cause **disruption to friendship groups.**
- Leave in term time should **always be avoided at the beginning of a new school term.**
- Leave in term time should **always be avoided close to examinations or tests.**
- Leave in term time should **always be avoided during the first year at a new school.**
- Leave in term time should **always be avoided during the Reception Year.**
- It is recommended that parents **request leave prior to confirming any booking.**
- Pupils who attend school regularly perform better in their end of key stage assessments (Y2 and Y6) and achieve higher grades at GCSE.
- Pupils who take **10 days' leave** during term-time can **achieve only a maximum attendance of 94.7%**, even if there are no other absences through the year.
The government recommendation for all school pupils to achieve their potential is 95%+.
- Research suggests that children who are taken out of school during term-time may **never catch up on work missed.**
- Taking a school child out of school in term-time may give them the unspoken message that it is acceptable to be absent from school during term-time.

Exceptional Leave In Term Time - Removing Pupils From Roll *(see flowchart attached)*

If a pupil does not return to school after an authorised or unauthorised 10 school day or more leave, government guidance states that the school must check that the pupil has a "good reason" for their continued absence. Examples of good reasons are given as disrupted travel arrangements or illness. The Head Teacher must decide whether the illness of someone other than the pupil is relevant. If parents do not voluntarily contact the school to supply a "good reason" for a pupil's continued absence the school should attempt to make contact with the parents using the contact details supplied on the



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exceptional leave consent form or in the school's general records. It is recommended that within three days of the pupil's expected date of return, the school should attempt to communicate with the parents either in writing or through a telephone conversation, which is noted. The following issues should be dealt with in the school's communication with the parents:

- The date the school expected the pupil to return.
- The parents' responsibility to ensure that the pupil attends school regularly.
- The reason why the pupil did not return on the expected date.
- The possibility of legal sanctions against the parents.
- The possibility of the school deleting the pupil from the school roll following a further 7 school days of absence.
- The fact that the pupil must be marked as unauthorised absence if there is no "good reason" for the pupil's continued absence.

If parents either voluntarily or following communication from the school supply the school with a "good reason" for the pupil's continued absence the pupil can be marked authorised absence whilst this reason continues.

If parents respond to communication from the school but do not supply a "good reason" for the pupil's continuing absence but the school is aware of the whereabouts of the pupil he/she can be taken off roll 10 school days or more after the date the pupil was expected to return to school.

If after reasonable enquiries by the school the pupil cannot be located or the school has welfare concerns over the pupil the Local Authority (Education Welfare Officer) should be contacted and the Education Welfare Service will carry out Local Authority checks and advise on future steps.

Children Under School Age

For reception classes parents can request that their child's entry to school is deferred until the child is of compulsory school age (ie. later in the school year, at the start of the term after the child's 5th birthday as long as this is not the start of the next academic year). This has the effect that the place is held for that child and is not available to be offered to another child.



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Exceptional Leave In Term Time – Removing Pupils From Roll
(10 days or more authorised or unauthorised absence)

