

## Absence from School during Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 states that head teachers could grant leave of absence of up to 10 days for the purposes of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances". Head teachers could also grant extended leave for more than 10 days in "exceptional circumstances".

However, the government announced that it had long recognised that schools were experiencing problems with parents using this threshold as a right, rather than as a rough guide for a particular sort of situation.

In September 2013, Ministers removed all references to family holidays from the regulations and said head teachers **could not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time without "exceptional circumstances"**.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is **Service Personnel** and is 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.
- 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**.
- The **death or terminal illness of a close relative**, only if Head Teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- **Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport** operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- **Religious observance** – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- **To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative** if the Head teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a head teacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Head teacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- **Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested (Exam/Mock Exams time/essential school activity);**
- **Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed**
- **The child's current attendance and punctuality rate**
- **Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose**
- **Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday**
- **Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school**

- **Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN □ The impact that the absence will have on the child.**

**Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional**

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments;
- Extended Family weddings where over one day is requested, or is abroad.

Royal Wootton Bassett Academy Trust endeavours to make its decisions according to the statutory guidance, but also tries to ensure a clear and consistent policy.

On this basis, the following will form the policy:

- Any application for 'Absence from School' during term time should be made on the appropriate form (see appendix one);
- Where absence is not authorised, no penalty notice will be requested from the County Education Welfare Service if less than 5 days of unauthorised absence is taken. It will remain on the students' record and can be taken into consideration if there is evidence of other unauthorised attendance during the year;
- Where absence is not authorised, and amounts to 5 days (10 sessions) or more, we will request the issue of a Penalty Notice from the County Education Welfare Service\*;

\*Each parent can be fined £60 for the unauthorised absence of each child. In September 2013, the timescale for payment was reduced to 21 days at £60 and 28 days at £120 respectively.



**Appendix 1**

Leave of Absence Request Form

Taking your child out of school during term time may harm your child's academic progress.

Absences may only be authorised at the discretion of the Head teacher in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances.

Circumstances which are notified to the school or Local Authority after a decision has been made by the Headteacher will not be considered. Therefore please be certain to provide details of the exceptional circumstances relating to your application below and attach any supporting evidence.

Please read the attached Local Authority leaflet which explains Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised Leave of Absence during term time.

Name of Child(ren)	
Date of Birth	
Class	
Date of First Day of Absence	
Date of Return	
Number of Days requested	
Known siblings and school(s) attending	

Exceptional Circumstances (reason) for Leave of Absence during term time:

.....  
 .....

Signed: Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed Head of Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed Deputy Head: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorised by Head/on Behalf of Head YES /NO

Reason given: \_\_\_\_\_

**For school use:**

Attendance%:

Total sessions pupil absent this academic year:

Total unauthorised absence this year: