Parental request for absence during term time

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PARENTAL REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

1. Parents wishing the school to consider granting leave in term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send the request form attached to the Headteacher/Principal. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered before the desired period of absence. (Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any planned absence before receiving the school's decision regarding their request.) In any event the request form must be received by the school at least four weeks before the leave in term time requested dates to allow sufficient time for appropriate consideration. Absence cannot be authorised retrospectively, so if the absence is not requested, it will be marked as unauthorised, regardless of circumstances. This is in line with national and local policy.

2. The granting of leave of absence in term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the Headteacher. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) Guidance 'Working together to Improve School Attendance (Aug '24)' states that: "*Generally the DfE does not consider need the desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance*." Telford & Wrekin Local Authority (LA) supports that view. Where such requests are made, the Headteacher should decide if there are exceptional circumstances before the leave is granted, if the leave is granted the Headteacher has the discretion to agree the duration of that leave.

3. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave in term time the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school may also take account of:

    - the exceptional circumstances stated that have given rise to the request.
    - whether the same trip/event could take place during the 13 weeks school is closed to pupils.
    - whether the child is compulsory school age.
    - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both.
    - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS/GCSEs/other important tests or examinations during that academic year will not normally be granted leave of absence.

    All exceptional circumstances should be stated at the time of requesting the leave. Circumstances which are not included on the form at the time of the request will not be considered afterwards.

4. Where parents have children in more than one school, a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, there is an expectation that all schools involved will communicate and all agree a decision whether to authorise or not. It is hoped that if this situation arises, parents will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any leave requests.

5. Where requests for a grant of leave in term time are received from only one parent the response letter – agreeing or refusing – will be either addressed to both/all parents where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all parents are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent may receive a penalty notice.

   Under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, the definition of a parent is:

   - All natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not
   - Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
   - Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

6. Should the school decide to grant the leave but the child does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave in term time period) and no acceptable information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence, or when the whereabouts of the child are unknown, his/her place at the school could be lost.

7. Should the School decide not to grant the leave, and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised which will be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £160 payable per parent, per child. This Penalty Notice fine will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £160 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings, which could ultimately result in a criminal record and a fine of up to £2500 and/or imprisonment for up to three months. If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, when parent(s) are deliberately or purposefully avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for events such as birthdays and taking their child out of school, or when there are only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD day or bank holiday.

Information from Telford & Wrekin Council regarding Leave of Absence in Term Time, and Penalty Notices can be found here:

Leave of Absence Leaflet

T&W Penalty Notice Information

New Road Academy
A LEARNING COMMUNITY TRUST ACADEMY

Request for Leave in Term Time from New Road Academy

Date: .....

To: The Headteacher of New Road Academy

I request permission for leave in term time from the academy for my child:

(Full name) .....

From (date) ..... to (date) ..... for (number) ..... academy days.

My child will be accompanied during the leave by:

(Parent/Carer) ..... and (Parent/Carer) .....

The exceptional circumstances and reason for this request are:

(If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet and attach to this form)

The academy will not authorise holidays during academy time.

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows:

Child(ren) full name(s) ..... School(s) .....

....

....

Name of 1st Parent/Carer ..... Signed .....

Current address .....

Mobile No. .....

Name of 2nd Parent/Carer ..... Signed .....

Current address .....

Mobile No. .....

Please return the completed form to reception. The academy will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether your request is authorised or not. Please do not confirm any external bookings until you have confirmation of permission for leave in term time from the Headteacher.

For office use only

Date of request for leave in term time received by school .....

Current attendance .....% Last year's attendance .....%

Number of school sessions previously taken as leave in term time .....

Reference to **Siblings**: Other schools confirmed? .....

What action are other schools taking? .....

.....

Leave in term time Agreed / Not Agreed

Request for leave is **agreed / is not agreed** for the above pupil to take leave during term time between the requested dates.

Signed: ..... Position: .....

Print Name: ..... Date: .....

Notification of decision

Date letter sent to Parent / Carer .....

Notes: