

Term-time leave of absence

What does the law say?

The government changed the rules on term-time absence in 2013.

Under the new rules, you can only allow your child to miss school if:

- He or she is too ill to go in
- You've got advance permission from the school

How do I request permission for an absence?

You must submit a request to the school before you arrange for your child to have time away.

If you wish to take your child out of school during term time, you should speak to your child's teacher and submit a formal request to the headteacher via the school office.

The headteacher will then consider whether to give permission for the absence

Exceptional circumstances

It is at the school's discretion to decide which circumstances are 'exceptional'.

Examples of circumstances that are not exceptional may include:

- Cheap holidays or holidays that have already been paid for
- Absence that coincides with important school events such as the start of term or exams

As a general guideline, exceptional absence circumstances usually apply only to immediate family. Requests for leave related to extended family and friends are likely to be refused.

When will absence requests be granted?

Permission for absence will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**.

The headteacher will consider each absence request individually and decide whether to grant the absence.

The headteacher will also decide how many days your child can be away from school if the absence is granted.

What if I take my child on an unauthorised absence?

If you take your child out of school without advance permission (except where he or she is unwell), you can be fined or even prosecuted.

This could involve:

- A fixed penalty notice of £60 within 21 days, or £120 within 28 days
- A parenting order, education supervision order or school attendance order where your child repeatedly misses school without a good reason

Key things to remember

- You can only allow your child to miss school if he or she is ill, or if you have advance permission from the school
- Absence requests will only be granted in exceptional circumstances
- You can be fined for taking your child out of school without advance permission from the school

Why is it important?

Missing two weeks of school for a holiday might not seem like very much, but it can have a big effect on your child's education.

For example, if your child misses two weeks of school every year, this adds up to more than two terms over the child's whole time in school.

Making sure your child attends school as much as possible means:

- Your child will have the same education and opportunities as everyone else in the class
- You won't need to worry about catching up on work, or that your child might fall behind because of missing an important lesson
- Your child won't miss out on activities at the start and end of term, which are often fun and a chance to develop friendships

You should refer to the school absence policy when considering whether to submit an absence request

You can find out more about the rules around term-time absence in the following sources:

School attendance and absence: overview, GOV.UK

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013: regulation 2, legislation.gov.uk

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/756/regulation/2/made>