

Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in 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 below to the Headteacher. 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.
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 2024)*' states that: *Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.* Telford & Wrekin Local Authority (LA) policy 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 therefore, need 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 child is compulsory school age;
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements;
 - whether the same trip could be taken during the 13 weeks school is closed to pupils?
 - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take exams or statutory tests will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
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.
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 information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, **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 may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £160 per parent per child. This Penalty Notice fine will be reduced to £80 if paid within the first 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 fine of up to £2500 and/or imprisonment of up to three months.

Important information regarding leave in term time

From August 19th 2024 the Government have introduced a new 'national framework for Penalty Notices'. (in Telford & Wrekin the changes apply from 1st September 2024).

There are significant changes that parents need to be aware of:

- If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 school week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and do not have to be consecutive.***
- Penalty Notices are increasing to £160 from September 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.***
- Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160***
- A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.***
- 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. For example, when a parent purposefully tries to avoid a Penalty Notice by taking their child out of school when there is only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD day or bank holiday attached to that week.***
- In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included on schools website or a simple warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.***

'Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from school. (DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence).'

In developing and publishing the new national framework, the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors and Headteacher of this school support this and students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The DfE Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Feb 2024) states that: Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. (Paragraph 38.)

Each application for leave in term time will be considered and if it is agreed and authorised the Headteacher will determine the duration of any leave. However, if the application is not agreed and the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised. Parents will be notified of any decision in writing. This notification may be hand delivered directly to the parent or posted to the parents' home address.

As a school we are asked to inform you that in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, if your child is absent for 10 school sessions within a 10 week rolling period and that absence is unauthorised, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine, criteria is as detailed above.

Request for Leave during Term Time

To: The Headteacher of (School) Date ____ / ____ / ____

I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

my child (full name) _____ Date of Birth ____ / ____ / ____ Class _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

Contact Number _____ Contact Number _____

for the period from (date) ____ / ____ / ____ to (date) ____ / ____ / ____

Total number of days _____

My child will be accompanied during the leave by:

(parent/carer) _____ and (parent/carer) _____
(printed name) (printed name)

The **exceptional circumstances** and reason for this request are: -

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

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

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

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

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

Name of 1st Parent/Carer(s) _____ Signed _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

Mobile No _____

Name of 2nd Parent/Carer(s) _____ Signed _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

Mobile No _____

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

For Office Use Only

Date request for leave in term time was received _____ / _____ / _____

Current Attendance _____% (attach the sheet)

Last Year's Attendance _____% (attach the sheet)

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

Re: **Siblings:** other schools confirmed? YES [] NO SIBLINGS []

What action are other schools taking? _____

Leave in term time Agreed [] Not Agreed []

Request for leave has not been agreed because:-

Signed _____

Job Title **Headteacher**

Print Name

Date _____ / _____ / _____

Notification letter sent to the Parent/Carer _____ / _____ / _____