



Leave in Term Time Policy

For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless they have an unavoidable reason to be absent. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and will affect their learning. Taking leave in term time will affect children's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

By law, maintained schools cannot authorise any leave in term time other than in exceptional circumstances. **If leave is being requested that involves arranging travel or accommodation, approval must be obtained from the head teacher before making any bookings.**

Whilst there is no specific definition of what would constitute 'exceptional circumstances', a dictionary definition of 'forming an exception or rare instance; unusual; extraordinary' may assist schools and parents in understanding when approval for leave may be granted. By definition, leave granted under exceptional circumstances should not occur regularly.

Leave of absence, in term time, will not be granted unless:

- a request for leave has been made in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides (using the form available on the school website or from the school office), **and**
- the head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the request.

Due to the need to evidence exceptional circumstances, parents are advised to provide school with any relevant information regarding their request at the point of application if they believe the circumstances are exceptional. Such documents will not be considered after the leave has been taken.

In considering the request, school will also consider other factors such as:

- The timing of the requested leave, e.g. when a pupil is just starting at school or during assessment periods, such as SATs.
- A pupil's attendance record already includes unauthorised absence.
- Attendance is already a concern, or could become a concern, as a result of taking leave.
- Other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic years.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in the school having to submit legal intervention paperwork. The local authority will then consider which sanction would be most appropriate. Such interventions include penalty notices and prosecution. See appendix A for further information about legal interventions.

In certain circumstances, as outlined in regulation, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if leave is taken and the criteria governing removal from roll are met.

Appendix A

Legal Interventions

- Penalty notices will be charged at a rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10- school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).

From 1st January 2025, the following rules will apply across the whole Lancashire County Council area:

1. Unauthorised leave less than 15 school days: penalty notice issued
2. Unauthorised leave of 15 school days or more: the Local Authority will review any requests for penalty notices and may prosecute parents and not offer the opportunity to pay a penalty notice fine instead.