

What the law says

The law says that parents/carers do not have a legal right to take their child out of school during term time.

However, schools can allow parents/carers to take their child out of school in exceptional circumstances providing an application is made in advance by the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides. The Headteacher has discretion to authorise such leave.

If you take a leave of absence without the permission of the school or if your child fails to return by the agreed date if permission was granted, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and noted in your child's record. If your child has not returned within 10 days of the expected date of return then, after consultation with the Local Authority, the school may take your child off their school roll.

The school may also ask the Education Welfare Service to consider a Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If you do not pay a Penalty Notice you will be prosecuted in court.

What schools can do

Each school has a policy on granting leave of absence. A Headteacher can only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

Schools will take into account Government guidance when considering what exceptional circumstances are. Leave of absence requests for the following reasons are not considered to be exceptional circumstances:

- availability of cheap holidays,
- availability of the desired accommodation,
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods,
- periods overlapping with beginning or end of term.

What parents / carers can do

You should request time off for your child as soon as possible and always 4 weeks before the leave of absence. However, please do not expect the school to grant your request unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to carefully consider the implications of taking your child out of school during term time. There are 190 statutory school days a year; so there are 175 other days (weekends and school holidays) available which would not have a negative effect on your child's education.

By taking your child out of school for a leave of absence you may be giving them an unspoken message that school does not matter. Some children may find it difficult to renew friendships with other pupils when they return to school.

If the school does grant leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances, please discuss with the Headteacher how you will help your child to catch up with the missing hours of education lost (50 hours for 10 days leave of absence).

Especially avoid taking your child out of school:

- close to, or during, examinations,
- when valuable group work with other pupils is taking place that cannot be repeated,
- if your child needs help in certain subjects to access all the education support that is offered,
- during the Induction Week when your child transfers from one school phase to another and needs to familiarise themselves with the new school layout,
- during the first year in a new school when pupils may experience problems settling in.



Where can you contact us?

The Education Welfare Service offers support and advice about your child's education.

Please ask the school for the phone number of your Education Welfare Officer.

Alternatively, contact the Education Welfare Service at Borough Hall at the address and phone number on the back of this leaflet.



Other Education Welfare Service Leaflets

The Education Welfare Service - Information for parents

- School Attendance, Guidance on Prosecutions
- School Attendance Orders
- Penalty Notices
- The Education Welfare Service
- Absentee Investigation Patrols
- Children Missing Education
- Employing School Age Children

Finding out more

If you would like further copies, a large-print copy or information about us and our services, please telephone or write to us at our address below.

Për Informacion

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 01234 228304

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Leave of Absence in Term Time

Information leaflet for parents and carers

