

THE BERWICK PARTNERSHIP OF SCHOOLS

School Term Time Leave Guidance

DfE Guidelines

As of August 2013 the DfE has amended the 2006 regulations around Term-time holidays. These amendments remove references to “family holiday” and “extended leave” as well as the “statutory threshold of 10 school days”. The amendments made clear that Head Teacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If leave is granted, Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.

Parents are not entitled to remove children from school for holidays, leave of absence must be applied for and the decision to authorise absence rests entirely with the head teacher.

Guidance to Parents/Carers where leave is being applied for in exceptional circumstances:

- Before making arrangements for the leave of absence, Parents/Carers must seek permission from the school in writing.
- The letter should indicate if siblings attending another school in the Partnership are also requesting leave.
- The actual date that the child will return to school must always be provided by the Parents/Carers.
- Parents/Carers may be asked to attend a brief appointment to discuss the application.
- Leave is unlikely to be granted during school exams and the first two weeks of the autumn term.
- The school will carefully consider their request and may take the child’s attendance and attainment records into account.
- Leave of absence and the number of days is granted entirely at the Head Teacher’s discretion.
- Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of as family holiday as a norm.
- The school may set work for the child to do while he/she is away.
- The Head Teacher’s decision is final- there is no appeal mechanism.

Guidance to Schools:

Parents have legal duty to make sure that their child aged 5 – 16, if registered at a school, attends that school regularly. Taking an unauthorised term time holiday would be grounds for issuing a penalty notice according to the local authority’s code.

Only in exceptional circumstances a parent may be granted leave of absence. It is for Head Teachers to determine if the request is exceptional and to determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. Each request can only be judged on a case by case basis and we expect that head teachers will use their discretion sparingly.

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

- The Head Teacher should only grant leave of absence where there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

THE BERWICK PARTNERSHIP OF SCHOOLS AGREED CRITERIA

- Before making arrangements for the leave of absence, Parents/Carers must seek permission from the school in writing.
- The letter should indicate if siblings attending another school in the Partnership are also requesting leave.
- The actual dates that the child will be absent from school must be provided by the Parents/Carer.
- Parents/Carers may be asked to attend a brief appointment to discuss the application.
- Leave is unlikely to be granted during school exams and the first two weeks of the autumn term as this is an important time for establishing routines and relationships.
- The school will carefully consider the request and may take the child's attendance and attainment records into account. **
- Leave of absence and the number of days granted is entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion.
- Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.
- The school may set work for the child to do while he/she is away.
- The Head Teacher's decision is final- there is no appeal mechanism.

**The child's attendance is currently above 94% (if it is the start of a new academic year, then the attendance of the previous year will be used.)

School will inform the parent/carer, in writing, advising whether the leave has been authorised. It will be made clear the reasons why the decision has been taken and the criteria used. The letter will also explain the category of "unauthorised" absence should that be necessary.

The 2013 amendments to school attendance regulations [2006] remove references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that leave may only be granted in exceptional circumstances

Register Codes

- If the leave is authorised, the register code 'H' should be used.
The statistical meaning for this is authorised absence.
- If the Head Teacher declines the request for term time leave, and the child is absent due to the leave still being taken, the register code 'G' should be used. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised. The statistical meaning for this is unauthorised absence. In this case, normal procedures for non-attendance apply.

If the child does not return to school on the date agreed after authorised leave

- If another reason for absence is provided by the Parent/Carer the pupil should be registered appropriately. In all other cases the register should denote unauthorised absence.
- If the absence continues and remains unexplained, then a referral to the education welfare officer should be made.

Suggestions of what might be deemed ‘exceptional’ providing there have been no previous requests made and the attainment and attendance criteria have been met

- **Family wedding immediate family**
- **Medical/ mental health reasons that the family take leave outside school holidays [backed by covering letter from CYPS]**
- **Family in the forces / agricultural community and tourist industry – but should not happen every year [regularly]**

**Note that this list is not exhaustive*

Procedure for sharing this policy with families

- For this document to be effective it is essential that schools share with parents and pupils the expectations and procedures outlined in this document or in the school’s own procedural guidance.
- Reference can also be made to this policy in school prospectuses. Specific reference could also be made in home/school agreements and planners.
- Schools may wish to raise the profile of holidays in term- and school attendance in general- at school meetings and in school prospectuses and draw the content of this document to the attention of parents.