



'Love of Learning, Love of Life, Love of Christ!'
Our Core Christian Values: Respect, Effort, Aim High, Honesty,
Care and Love.

Hurstbourne Tarrant Church of England (Controlled) Primary School.
Headteacher: Mr Gareth Dee BScEcon (Hons) PGCE

Leave of Absence

Parental responsibilities

Parents/carers are legally required to secure full-time education for children of compulsory school age. A child who is registered at school must attend regularly and punctually.

Lateness

If a pupil is frequently arriving after the attendance register has closed, the parent/carer is committing an offence by failing to ensure that the child is receiving full-time education and the parent/carer may therefore be issued with a penalty notice or prosecuted under the Education Act 1996, Section 444.

Requests for approved leave of absence

2013 Amendments to the Pupil Registration (England) 2006 Regulations state that: *"Headteachers may not grant any approved leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted"*. Before any request for leave absence is approved, a headteacher must be satisfied that there are *"exceptional circumstances"* justifying the request for leave of absence. The Department for Education (DfE) has in their amendments specifically removed references to *family holiday, extended leave* and the statutory threshold of *10 school days*.

Defining exceptional circumstances

However, the Department for Education has not defined *exceptional circumstances*, except to explain that: *"Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent/carer gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling"*. The nature of the words *exceptional circumstances* are such that they indicate unusual events or an abnormal occurrence. It is therefore not possible to define in advance when a request will or will not be exceptional.

How do I decide whether my request is exceptional?



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The following 'rule of thumb' may be helpful in considering a request for a leave of absence:

Could this request for leave take place during the normal school holidays?

If the answer is yes then it is not an exceptional circumstance.

The Department for Education is clear that there is no parental/carer right for a family holiday: cost, experiences for the child, weather and overlapping with school holidays are not factors on which the decision should be made.

Even if it your request is an 'exceptional circumstance' the Headteacher will also still need to take into consideration the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling; followed by the frequency of the requests before authorising the request. The Headteacher does not have to approve leave of absence even if the reason given is exceptional.

If a leave of absence is approved the Headteacher will also consider the number of days they are able to authorise. The minimum reasonable number of days for the request is likely to be approved. For example, approval is likely to be given for an immediate family wedding but, depending on the location of the wedding, the number of days approved for travelling may be reduced.

Further guidance for parents can be accessed from the County Council website:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/behaviour-attendance-parents>