



Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **complete the attached form and send it to the head teacher**. This form should be sent to the **school at least two weeks before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
2. The Department for Education makes it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children, receive the best education and prospects, they should be in school during term time.
5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence.
In considering a request, the school will take account of:
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
 - frequency of similar requests
 - whether the parent made the request in advance
6. Students/pupils due to take SATS **will not** normally be granted leave of absence.
7. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The head teacher at each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, head teachers may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
8. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, 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 of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
9. Should the school decide not to grant leave of absence 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 £80 per parent* per child. This fine will increase to £160 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £160 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.
10. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers in challenging parents who ignore the law.

* Generally, the DfE states that parents include all those with day-to-day responsibility for a child

School Penalty Notices for Attendance are Changing from August 2024

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into effect for all those issued after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice are issued to each parent, for each absent child.

For Example: 2 siblings absent for leave during term time would result in each parent receiving 2 separate Penalty Notices.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Irregular Attendance or leave in Term Time the amount will be £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence

(Within 3 Years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Irregular Attendance or leave in Term Time the amount will be **£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.**

Third Offence

(Within 3 years)

The third time a Penalty Notice is issued for leave in Term Time or irregular attendance, the case will be presented to the Magistrates Court, where fines of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be imposed.

Note: Cases found guilty in Magistrates Court can show on Parents future DBS certificates as a 'Failure to safeguard a child's education'.

10 sessions of Unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notices will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of Unauthorised absence in a 10school week period.

These Absences can be late after register closes, Unauthorised Absences and Unauthorised Term Time leave absences. They can also be a combination of any of the above.

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority on the instruction from the School/Academy, in line with the Department for Education legislation. Once issued these cannot be withdrawn.

The dfe guidance from August 2024 regarding leave of absence, advises that the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday, or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation, to be an exceptional circumstance.