

Family holidays in term time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 govern leave of absence in term time for maintained schools and special schools not maintained by the local authority (Regulation 7).

- permission for leave of absence from school can only be granted by the headteacher (or a member of staff authorised by the headteacher);
- a parent with whom the pupil normally lives can apply in advance to school for a leave of absence to enable the pupil to go away on holiday;
- schools have the discretion whether or not to grant the leave of absence; but,
 - only in exceptional circumstances should a pupil be granted more than ten school days in any school year;
- schools can refuse the whole period, grant part and refuse the rest or grant the whole period that has been requested.

Registration codes to be used for holidays:

Code	Description	Meaning
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed) – up to 10 days in school year	Authorised absence

Policy on term time holidays:

- the policy should have a clear statement in relation to the taking of family holidays in term time, for example:
 - effects on attendance levels;
 - lesson time lost;
- the policy should neither have a blanket ban on term time holidays nor give a right to time off for family holidays:
- schools can set reasonable criteria for grounds for refusal, for example:
 - not during public examinations;
 - dependent on level of attendance;
- the policy should include the procedure for parents to apply for a leave of absence:
 - the local authority has designed a standard form that can be used by all schools;
- each request for holiday absence should be considered individually, taking account of:
 - the age of the child;
 - the time of year proposed for the trip;
 - its nature and parental wishes;
 - the overall attendance pattern of the pupil;

- the child's stage of education and progress.
- schools should check whether siblings at other schools will be given permission for the same holiday.

Holidays taken without permission or in excess of agreement

- absences must be coded 'G' – unauthorised absence;
- for pupils of compulsory school age:
 - schools may request the local authority to hold an attendance meeting without the normal warning and monitoring period;
 - so that a decision can be made in respect of issuing a penalty notice for the following reason:
 - the deliberate taking of a holiday in term time without the permission of the school which has created a period of unauthorised absence of at least 10 sessions during a four week period within the previous three months;
 - it would have to be clearly demonstrated that the parent understood that permission for the holiday had not or would not be given.

Failure to return from an extended family holiday

- absences must be coded 'G' – unauthorised absence;
- school should refer the case to the EWS for investigation as soon as possible (within 5 days).

The pupil may be deleted from roll if:

- they have been absent for 10 school days following the agreed return date; and,
- there are no grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of illness or other unavoidable cause; and,
- both the school and the local authority have failed to locate the pupil after reasonable enquiry.