



Telford & Wrekin  
C O U N C I L

# Leave in Term Time Absence Policy

In line with:

- Working Together to Improve Attendance - DfE August 2024
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Penalty Notices Framework (England) August 2024
- The Education Act 1996 - Section 444

**Reviewed and Revised September 2025**

## **Leave in Term Time Absence Policy**

### **Introduction**

This Telford & Wrekin Council LA Policy Statement has been developed within the context of the new national legislation and local priority of raising the educational achievement and attainment of pupils.

Guidelines with regard to travelling children are different. Please seek guidance from the Advisory Teacher for EHE & GRT - Tel: 01952 381002 and/or *the Multicultural Development Team (MDT), Tel: 01952 380828*

Leave in term time which results in significant absence from school, is disruptive to the child's education and has a detrimental impact on attainment.

The purpose of this policy statement is to provide updated guidance on procedures to be followed by schools to manage absence in term time.

A number of factors indicated the need to introduce the policy:

- Government evidence on underachieving groups of pupils, particularly those from minority ethnic groups, and LAs responses to this, indicate a national trend in reducing the number of weeks deemed acceptable for an extended absence.
- The Telford & Wrekin Council Code of Conduct (Revised September 2025) supports the LA's view that parents should be made aware of new regulations and legislation about absence in term time, including for family holidays.

In order for the policy to succeed, it is essential that it is formally adopted and implemented by schools' governing bodies and information shared with pupils, families and the wider community.

### **Legislation**

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 provide, in respect of leave of absence in term time –

#### Regulation 11 Leave of Absence

- 11.—**(1) Leave of absence from a school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority may only be given by a person who the school's proprietor has authorised to do so (an "authorised person").
- (2) An authorised person may not give a pupil leave of absence to undertake employment (whether paid or unpaid) during school hours except—
- (a) employment to take part in a regulated performance; or
- (b) regulated employment abroad.
- (3) An authorised person may not give a pupil leave of absence for any other purpose unless any of paragraphs (4) to (11) applies.
- (4) [This paragraph](#) applies if—
- (a) the leave is to enable the pupil to attend an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution; and
- (b) an appropriate person has asked for the leave in advance.
- (5) [This paragraph](#) applies if—
- (a) the leave is to enable the pupil to study for a public examination; and
- (b) the leave has been agreed in advance between the authorised person and an appropriate person.
- (6) [This paragraph](#) applies if—

- (a) the pupil will be of compulsory school age at all times that the leave relates to;
  - (b) the authorised person and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, because of exceptional circumstances, the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis;
  - (c) the authorised person and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will, during the period of temporary part-time education, be expected to attend the school; and
  - (d) the leave is to enable the pupil to be absent in accordance with that agreement.
- (7) [This paragraph](#) applies if—
- (a) the pupil will be under compulsory school age at all times that the leave relates to;
  - (b) a parent who the pupil normally lives with has told the proprietor that they wish the pupil to attend the school on a part-time basis;
  - (c) the authorised person and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend the school; and
  - (d) the leave is to enable the pupil to be absent in accordance with that agreement.
- (8) This paragraph applies if—
- (a) the pupil will be over compulsory school age at all times that the leave relates to;
  - (b) the authorised person thinks that the pupil need only attend the school on a part-time basis;
  - (c) the authorised person and the pupil or a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend the school; and
  - (d) the leave is to enable the pupil to be absent in accordance with that agreement.
- (9) [This paragraph](#) applies if the leave is to enable the pupil to attend—
- (a) another school at which they are a registered pupil;
  - (b) any other place for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the 1996 Act or section 42(2) or 61(1) of the 2014 Act; or
  - (c) any other place for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the proprietor and supervised by a member of school staff.
- (10) [This paragraph](#) applies if the leave is to enable the pupil to attend a place for an approved educational activity within [regulation 10\(11\)](#).
- (11) [This paragraph](#) applies if—
- (a) an appropriate person has asked for the leave in advance; and
  - (b) the authorised person thinks that leave should be given because of the exceptional circumstances of the request.
- (12) In this regulation, in relation to leave of absence for a pupil, “appropriate person” means—
- (a) a parent who the pupil normally lives with; and
  - (b) if the pupil will be over compulsory school age when the absence begins, the pupil.

The new regulations have clarified that leave of absence can be applied for and permission granted when there are exceptional circumstances.

### **DfE Guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* – August 2024**

Schools may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances, and schools should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school.

There is no automatic right to any holiday in term time.

Advice is available to schools from the Attendance Support Team.

Leave of absence must be requested from and agreed by the Headteacher in advance of any absence. If approved, the absence is recorded in the attendance register as ‘C’ code, = exceptional circumstances and authorised.

N.B From 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 the ‘H’ code has been removed from the National attendance and absence codes

If the request for leave in term time is not approved but still taken, registered as 'G' code, unauthorised. Schools should have sample letter in place to use when dealing with requests for any leave in term time, the Attendance Support Team have provided sample documentation to all Telford & Wrekin schools, including information for the school website. This provides parents/carers with information about the possible consequences of taking leave that has not been authorised. Schools should display information on their website.

The DfE guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance – August 2024* makes the following points:

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

346. All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence should not, and from a school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority, must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

347. Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

348. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only grant such a leave of absence under regulation 11(11), where an application is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence).

349. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

350. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record where a pupil is absent with leave for a reason that is not covered by another leave of absence code.

351. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

### **Leave in Term Time**

The LA policy supports legislation which makes it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

### **There is no automatic right to any leave or holiday in term time.**

Leave of absence must be requested from and agreed by the school in advance of any absence. If approved, the absence is registered as authorised and if not approved but still taken, as unauthorised. Schools should confirm in writing their decision whether to authorise any leave in term time or not following any requests for leave in term time. This provides parents/carers with written information about the possible consequences of taking leave that has not been authorised.

Permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school. Schools should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The regulations clearly make the point that the Headteacher has the final decision as to whether to authorise the leave or not. There should be no 'blanket policy' but schools should consider individual

circumstances. In deciding whether or not to grant the request for leave of absence the following should be taken into account;

- can the leave requested be taken during the 13 weeks the school is closed?
- age of the child(ren)
- phase of education;
- time of the year and examinations;
- length, destination and purpose of the leave requested and whether it is likely to be a rare event in the life of the child;
- family circumstances and the parents/carers reasons for wanting to take their child out of school during term time.

A child's name can be removed from the register if the pupil has been granted a leave of absence and after absence:

- s/he has not returned by the agreed date;
- and s/he has continued to be absent for a further twenty school days;
- and the Headteacher is not satisfied that this is because s/he is ill or the absence is unavoidable.

Any pupils to be removed from the school roll should first be referred to [childmissingeducation@telford.gov.uk](mailto:childmissingeducation@telford.gov.uk) .

**Procedures for authorising leave in term time can be summarised as:**

- Leave in term time are actively discouraged by the school and the LA;
- Leave in term time absence is not a right and should not automatically be granted;
- Leave should only be granted where proper procedures have been followed and it is deemed an exceptional circumstance;
- Legislation does not allow for the leave of absence to be granted retrospectively;
- It remains a discretionary power of the Headteacher to authorise leave of absence. Clear advice needs to be included within the school's attendance policy.
- Parents who continue to remove their child from school without permission will meet the criteria to be issued with a Penalty Notice.

See Appendix 1

**Extended Absence**

In the case of requests for extended trips, Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

If parents are considering visits to their country of family origin, they are encouraged to make them during school holiday periods.

Parents should be advised that:

- Any extended absence can be damaging to a child's progress.
- The cumulative effect of periods of absence can seriously impact on a child's educational achievement.

Where leave of absence is granted, the school may wish to consider a home/school contract, stating date of return, agreed and signed by the parent and Headteacher. A suggested format for the contract, which should be printed on school headed paper, is attached at Appendix 4. The school and the parent(s) should retain a copy of the contract.

Failure to agree a home/school contract or non-return by the agreed date may trigger a Penalty Notice (please refer to T & W code of conduct on Penalty Notices in relevant section of this guidance) and places the child at risk of losing his/her school place. Parents would then have to re-apply online for a school place with Telford & Wrekin Council following the school application procedures. This means that:

- the child may or may not be readmitted,
- parents may have to go to appeal which may or may not be successful,
- the child may have to go to another school.

In normal circumstances, requests for absence should be made to the school well in advance. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. family bereavement, families are still required to contact the school to request leave of absence.

This policy relates to all parents wishing to take their children on extended visits to their country of family origin or leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances.

### **Procedures for Agreed (Extended) Absence**

The procedures and timeline for intervention regarding extended visits are detailed in the flow charts included in Appendix 5a & 5b.

The letters referred to in the timeline are included in Appendices 6a, 6b and 6c should be issued on school headed paper.

Please contact [Admissions@telford.gov.uk](mailto:Admissions@telford.gov.uk) for advice regarding pupils returning to the UK without a school place.

Please be aware that parents may need to consider that Countries they are travelling too may be subject to further restrictions at short notice.

Unless otherwise stated, actions detailed should be taken by the school. The school has a responsibility to monitor closely the attendance of any pupil who has been granted extended absence.

### **Maximising the Educational Opportunities of Visits**

When schools and parents/families meet to agree the extended absence contract, they should discuss ways in which pupils can be helped to derive maximum educational benefit from the visit.

### **Procedures for Sharing with Families the Recommendations made in the Guidelines**

For this policy statement to be effective, it is essential that schools share with parents the expectations and procedures outlined in this document.

This could be done in a number of different ways:

- new intake evenings or parents' evenings,
- leaflet for parents,
- reminders in newsletters,
- statement in the school/parent contract (if applicable),
- on school's website.

**The Local Authority recommends that the following Information is added to schools website & any correspondence to parents regarding leave in term time**

## **Information to add to schools website & correspondence regarding leave in term time**

***From August 19<sup>th</sup> 2024 the Government have introduced a new 'national framework for Penalty Notices'. (in Telford & Wrekin the changes apply from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024).***

***There are significant changes that parents need to be aware of:***

- If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 school-week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and do not have to be consecutive.***
- Penalty Notices increased to £160 from September 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.***
- Any 2<sup>nd</sup> Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160***
- If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, when parent(s) are deliberately or purposefully avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for events such as birthdays and taking their child out of school, or when there are only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD Day or bank holiday***
- A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.***
- In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included on school's website or a simple warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.***
- For the purpose of the escalation process, previous Penalty Notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward if the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn.***

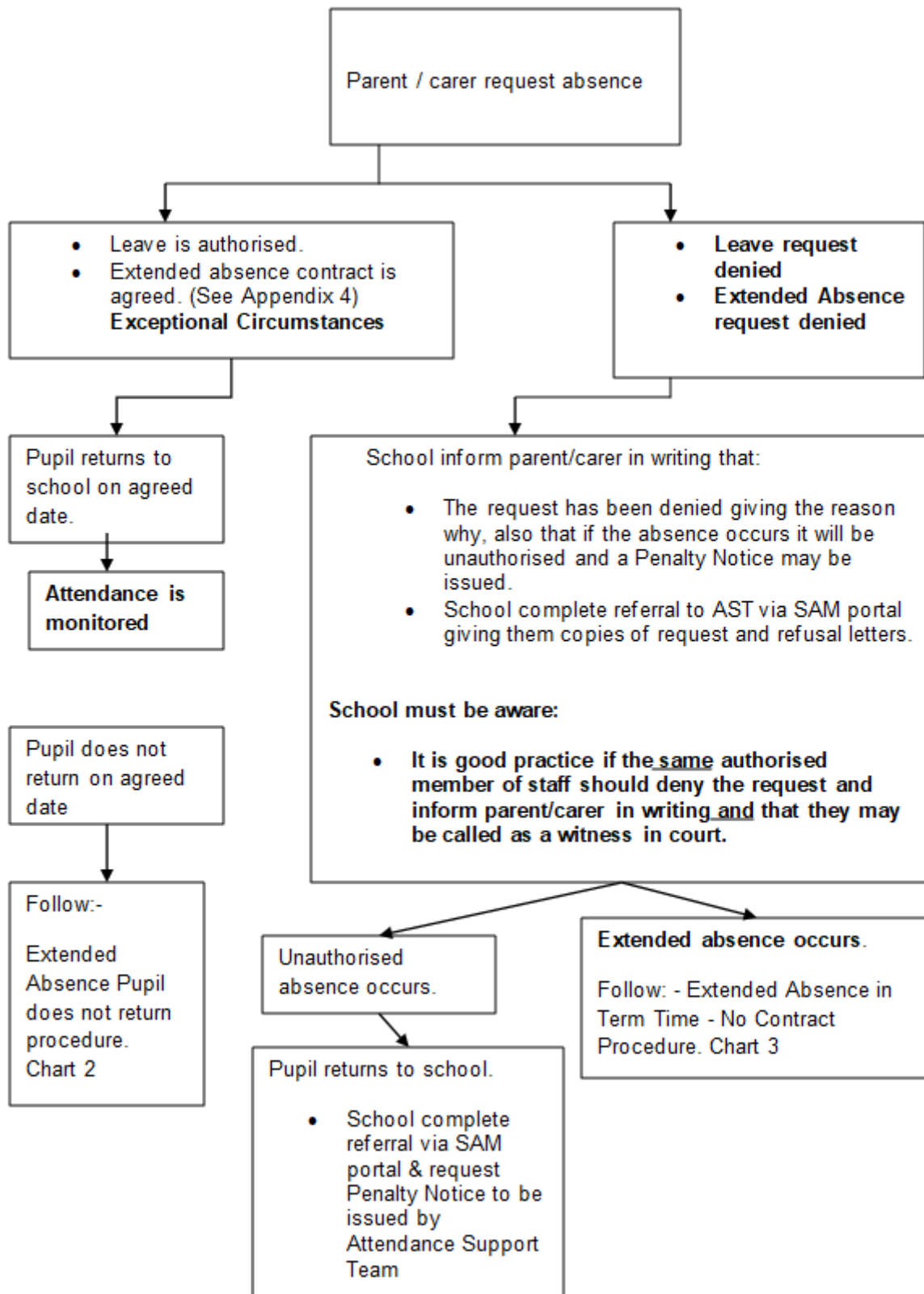
***'Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from school. (DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence).'***

***In developing and publishing the new national framework, the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors and Headteacher of this school support this and students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The DfE Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Feb 2024) states that: Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. (Paragraph 38.)***

***Each application for leave in term time will be considered and if it is agreed and authorised the Headteacher will determine the duration of any leave. However, if the application is not agreed and the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised. Parents will be notified of any decision in writing. This notification may be hand delivered directly to the parent or posted to the parents' home address.***

***As a school we are asked to inform you that in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, if your child is absent for 10 school sessions within a 10-week rolling period and that absence is unauthorised, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine, criteria is as detailed above.***

Authorisation Procedure



## Appendix 2

### Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents wishing the school to consider granting leave in term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send the request form below to the Headteacher. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **before** the desired period of absence. (Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any planned absence before receiving the school's decision regarding their request). In any event the request form must be received by the school at least four weeks before the leave in term time requested dates to allow sufficient time for appropriate consideration.
2. The granting of leave of absence in term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the Headteacher. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) Guidance '*Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Feb 2024)*' states that: *Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.* Telford & Wrekin Local Authority (LA) policy supports that view. Where such requests are made, the Headteacher should decide if there are **exceptional circumstances** before the leave is granted, if the leave is granted the Headteacher has the discretion to agree the duration of that leave.
3. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents therefore, need to consider very carefully before making any request for leave in term time, the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school may also take account of: -
  - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request;
  - whether the child is compulsory school age;
  - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements;
  - whether the same trip could be taken during the 13 weeks school is closed to pupils?
  - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
4. Where parents have children in more than one school, a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, there is an expectation that all schools involved will communicate and all agree a decision whether to authorise or not. It is hoped that if this situation arises parents will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any leave requests.
5. Where requests for a grant of leave in term time are received from only one parent the response letter – agreeing or refusing – will be either addressed to both/all parents where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all parents are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent may receive a penalty notice.
6. Should the school decide to grant the leave. 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 in term time period) and, no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, **his/her place at the school could be lost.**
7. Should the School decide **not to grant the leave** 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 £160 per parent per child. This Penalty Notice fine will be reduced to £80 if paid within the first 21 days. Failure to pay the £160 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings, which could ultimately result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or imprisonment of up to three months.

**Request for Leave during Term Time**

Date.....

To: The Headteacher of:.....(School)

I request permission for leave in term time from school for my child:

(full name) .....

from (date) ..... to (date) ..... for ..... school days.

My child will be accompanied during the leave by:

(parent/carer) ..... and (parent/carer).....

The **exceptional circumstances** and reason for this request are: -

(If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet and attach it to this form)

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s) ..... School(s) .....

.....

.....

**Name of 1<sup>st</sup> Parent/Carer(s)** ..... **Signed** .....

Current address.....

Mobile No:.....

**Name of 2<sup>nd</sup> Parent/Carer(s)** ..... **Signed** .....

Current address.....

Mobile No:.....



