

Amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

From September 2013, the school attendance regulations have been amended. The amendment makes clear that headteachers cannot grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. It removes references to family holidays and the threshold of 10 school days.

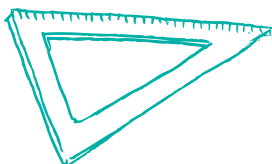
Holidays

The majority of us look forward to holidays. Whether it's time off work, simply a break from the normal activities of the day, or the trip of a lifetime, we all need time to recharge our batteries and spend some quality time together as a family. There are lots of reasons why we choose to holiday at certain times of the year -

- we get the weather we want
- the price is cheaper
- flights are only available on certain days
- we want to go with other people and it's the only time they can go
- it's easier to get time off work

Although we appreciate the benefits of all the above reasons, if you are wanting to take your child out of school to go on holiday, please think again.

Your child's progress and continuity of learning must come first. We strive for full attendance at all Outwood Academies and we want the same for your child. Think about the message you are giving to your child that it's acceptable to miss school to go on holiday.



School Holiday/Term Dates

Term dates can be found in the front of student planners and on the Academy website. Alternatively, you can telephone your Academy. Term dates for future years are always set well in advance and are published on the Academy website or are available on request.

Useful Links

www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/school_attendance

www.ace-ed.org.uk/advice/attendance

Local Council Education Welfare Service website

Your individual Academy's website

www.outwood.com

Attendance Office

If you wish to discuss any leave of absence request, or anything concerning your child's attendance please contact your Academy's Attendance Office.

Please call your Academy's main telephone number.
(You can leave a message 24 hours a day)



LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME



The Facts

Outwood Academies expect that **all** students will attend every day the school is open unless they are too ill to do so.

Having 10 days' absence in an academic year means that the maximum attendance your child can achieve is 94.7%.

If your child is absent for a further 10 days (a total of 20 days' absence), their overall annual attendance would drop to just 89.5%. A student with 90% or below is identified as a 'Persistent Absentee'.

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Research shows, of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and maths. But 73% of pupils who attend 95% of school achieve this.

Two weeks' absence means your child loses 60 hours of learning which they can never get back. Your child could miss a whole topic which won't be re-visited.

A two week holiday during term time every year of your child's life equals almost 2 full terms of education missed over their whole school career.

Friendships suffer - during 2 weeks' absence, social groups change. Your child may not fit back into the same friendship group on his/her return.

Absence causes disruption to other students and staff. Teachers cannot be expected to provide extra work and spend extra time with a student who has been absent without authorisation.



The Law

The Government advises that only exceptional circumstances warrant authorised leave of absence from school. Leave may only be granted if an application has been made by the parent/carer in advance and the proprietor of the school considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances.

The Regulations make it clear that parents/carers have no right or entitlement to take their children out of school for family holidays.

As a parent/carer, you have a legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly.

A parent/carer who takes their child(ren) out of school without authorisation could be deemed to be failing in their responsibility to ensure regular attendance at school. This is contrary to Section 444 of The Education Act 1996.

Legal proceedings can be instigated against parents/carers by way of:

- Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court which could result in a fine of up to £1000, or;
- The issue of a Penalty Notice under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. This is £60 per parent for each child, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent for each child if paid between 21 and 28 days. Failure to pay can result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

In some cases, where a child fails to return from a leave of absence within 10 school days of their expected return date, they may be deleted from the roll of the school. Parents must then re-apply for a school place which could be at a different school if the original place has been filled.

Important:

Outwood Academies **cannot** and **will not** authorise leave of absence unless the circumstances are exceptional.

What are 'Exceptional' Reasons?

Each request is considered individually and the reason and duration of the request will be taken into account. A single day absence may be granted for a funeral or significant close family event; or for an educational event e.g. participation in a major sporting or musical event or performance. Absence due to a family crisis or compassionate reasons may also be considered exceptional reasons.

Please note, requests for 'days out' or weekends away, regardless of their educational value, will not be authorised.

Academy Procedures

If you or your child are experiencing any difficulties either in school or out of school, which may impact on his/her attendance, please contact us as soon as possible in order that we may offer support.

If after reading this leaflet, you still need to take your child out of school and consider your reasons to be exceptional, you should ask for a request form from the Attendance Office. Please include as much information as you can to enable us to consider your request. The form should be submitted as far in advance of the proposed absence as possible (we appreciate that in some circumstances this is not practical).

You will receive a letter in response to your request, giving our decision and explaining the reasons for our decision.