



Pupil absence request for exceptional circumstances

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to a pupil during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents do not have the automatic right to withdraw pupils from school and, in law, have to apply for permission in advance.



Exceptional circumstances are defined as exceptional significant family events or circumstances, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis, or forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting. The headteacher will consider every request individually, but circumstances which do not apply include:

- Holidays in England and/or abroad
- Family day trips
- Relatives coming to visit
- Visiting friends or family with different half term holidays
- Attending family weddings or visits to see family abroad

You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered by the school. If you withdraw your child without prior permission, you can be fined.

Each parent of a child of compulsory school age whose attendance has been unsatisfactory can be required to pay a penalty of £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. If you do not pay, you will be summonsed to appear in court for an offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, which could result in a criminal conviction recorded against you. Courts have a wider range of sentencing options, including a maximum fine of up to £1000.

As of 19 August 2024, the National Threshold for issuing a Penalty Notice has been met when a pupil has been recorded for an unauthorised absence for 10 sessions within 10 school weeks. A 'session' is a morning or afternoon. The '10-week school period' may span different terms or school years.

Fines are issued to each parent, for each child, as listed. These are the number of fines within a rolling three-year period:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first.
- In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, the Local Authority may consider a court prosecution.

Authorised officers have the discretion to issue a penalty notice without warning where the parent has chosen to take the child on leave during term time without authorisation, or evidence is subsequently found to suggest a child was away from school with the knowledge of the parent and does not meet any of the statutory defences:

- The child was absent for medical reasons
- The local education authority failed to provide transport when required to do so
- The absences were due to religious observance
- You had permission from the school or there was unavoidable cause

If you wish to proceed with an absence request for exceptional circumstances, please complete the following information.

School Name:	
Please note this school will not authorise the request for absence from school if your child's absence is below 97% .	
Headteacher Name:	
Class name or Year group:	
Pupil Name:	
Absence request date from:	
Absence request date to (inclusive):	
Any sibling names/classes:	
The exceptional reason why the absence needs to be taken in term time is:	
Sign and print name:	Date:

SCHOOL USE ONLY

Specify dates unauthorised:	
Specify dates authorised:	
Forward to North Somerset for Penalty:	Yes No
Signature of Headteacher:	
Date:	

Last academic year attendance (%):	
Current academic year attendance (%):	
Comments:	