

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM – exceptional circumstances

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. Permission must be sought in advance. Recent government regulations have removed the discretion on head teachers agreeing to term time holiday requests except in exceptional circumstances, considered on a case by case basis. You are advised not to make arrangements until your request has been considered by the school.

If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence may make you liable for a Penalty Notice (fine). Failure to settle a Penalty Notice may lead to prosecution by the local authority.

To: The Attendance Officer, Godmanchester Bridge Academy

I wish to have an absence of days authorised due to exceptional circumstances, for:

Child's Name Class

Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s).....

First day of absence..... Last day of absence

Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider. *Before completing this section please read the guidance overleaf.* Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.

Signature of
Parent(s)/Carer(s).....Date.....

Office use only

Date form received	No of school days absence requested	Current % attendance	Authorised	Attendance Code	Date entered onto SIMS
			Yes / No		

Signature of Attendance
Officer.....Date.....

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL IN TERM TIME

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special needs. Receiving a good full-time education will give your child the best possible start in life. Attending school regularly and punctually is essential if children are to make the most of the opportunities available to them. Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed, and younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.

As a parent/carer you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. Application must be made in advance, as schools do not have the power to authorise absence retrospectively.

Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (but try to make these outside school hours if at all possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- External examinations
- Exceptional significant family events or circumstances

Other examples of absence from school that will not be authorised:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad.
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if it does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave taken due to potential travel disruption.

WARNING

If a pupil takes unauthorised term-time leave for 10 consecutive sessions or more (generally 5 days) they will be subject to a Penalty Notice. The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £160 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child and this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

For second offences of unauthorised term-time leave (10 consecutive sessions or more) within a three-year rolling period, the fine is a flat £160 per parent, per child. For the third offence in a three-year rolling period, the referral will be automatically considered for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996.