

Request for authorisation of a leave of absence during term time



LIGHTHOUSE
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

The Government have provided guidance on what is deemed to be exceptional:

- Forces' Personnel on leave from a foreign posting.
- Parents' employment restrictions - **evidence will be requested from employers to prove that none of the school holidays can be used.**
- Significant family events or circumstances - these will need to be considered individually.

The Government have also noted areas which **would not be considered** exceptional, for example:

- Relatives visiting
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad.
- Family day trips.
- Visiting friends/family that have different half terms or holidays.
- Because a child has good attendance.

Further details are outlined in the School Attendance Policy

Through section 444A and section 444B of the Education Act 1996, it has become possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices require **each parent** of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a penalty, currently £80.00 if paid within 21 days or £160.00 if paid within 28 days. **These are with effect from 19th August 2024.**

If you do not pay the Penalty Notice:

In such cases you will be automatically summonsed to appear in Court for an offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 and can result in a criminal conviction recorded against you.

Courts have a wider range of sentencing options, which could include a maximum fine of up to £2500 and/ or up to three month's imprisonment.

The only statutory defences to the offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 are:

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

All information regarding penalties are detailed in paragraph 195 of the **Working Together to Improve School Attendance** documentation.