

Stogursey C of E Primary and Pre-School



with

West Somerset Education Partnership (WSEP)

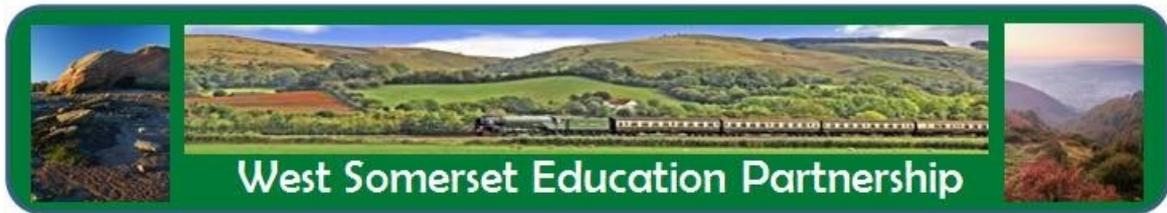
Attendance Policy

Approved by: LGC

Date: 23 Jan 2020

Last reviewed on: 23 Jan
2020

Next review due
by: January 2021



Attendance Policy

Revised November 2019

The following policy has been agreed by all schools in West Somerset in order to improve attendance to meet the minimum school target of 96%, with an expectation that all pupils will strive to achieve attendance between 97-100%. The policy will also ensure that there is consistent approach in all West Somerset schools.

Rationale:

All children and young people attending West Somerset schools have the right to receive an education that will give them every opportunity to achieve, and exceed, expectations. Regular attendance is essential to ensure that pupils' learning is not seriously interrupted and their level of attainment affected. Poor or irregular attendance places children at risk and, in some cases, can result in them being drawn into patterns of anti-social behaviour. The West Somerset Education Partnership (WSEP) is committed to working with parents¹, and others with parental responsibility, to support them in their legal obligation to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time.

Aims and Objectives:

- The WSEP aims to establish, maintain and improve the attendance of all pupils. This will support continuity of learning and, therefore, the opportunity for pupils to fulfil their potential.
- The WSEP ensures that all absences are followed up swiftly and consistently, in accordance with guidelines.
- It is the responsibility of each of the schools in the WSEP to encourage full attendance and take seriously any problems that may lead to non-attendance. We will support any pupils with difficulties in order that they can sustain their attendance.
- The WSEP sets annual targets together with the Education Safeguarding Service to reflect its commitment to regular attendance of all pupils.

¹ Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

- **The agreed Whole-WSEP Attendance Target for the 2019-2020 Academic Year is greater than 96%, with all pupils encouraged and supported to achieve 97-100% attendance.**

Responsibilities of Staff:

- It is the headteacher's role to ensure excellent attendance within their own school.
- Staff will work with parents and carers to ensure regular and punctual attendance by dealing with any attendance issues in a supportive way.
- There will be a named member of the leadership team responsible for attendance policy and procedure, with oversight of the production of attendance returns. They will ensure that school governors are made aware of information and issues relevant to attendance via the Headteacher's Report to their school's governors.
- The headteacher is responsible for maintaining a high level of attendance in their school and for raising awareness through sharing information with pastoral colleagues, assemblies, target setting, parental contact, attendance clinics for pupil and parents and regular meetings with the West Somerset Attendance Officer.
- Senior members of staff will be involved with monitoring and following up attendance concerns. This will include communication with children / young people, parents / carers and regular meetings with teachers.
- Teachers are responsible for day to day administration including the accurate registration of morning / afternoon attendance and the collection of attendance notes. Schools will challenge any absences that may require follow-up.
- Each school within the WSEP will have staff that support the headteacher in ensuring attendance is monitored effectively. This could include reception staff, attendance officers and other members of the administration team responsible for tasks such as updating tracking and monitoring systems and issuing letters.

Parental Responsibilities:

- It is the legal responsibility of the parent of a child registered at a school to ensure that the child attends school regularly.
- Parents should ensure that children arrive at school on time and are ready for the school day.
- If there is an unavoidable reason for a child's absence then parents are required to inform the school by telephone before the start of lesson one on the first, and then any subsequent, day of illness absence. If there is a planned medical absence, parents can also send a letter in advance so that the reason for non-attendance can be noted in the registers. If a parent cannot, or does not, supply a note or specific explanation for any illness absence, the school will classify it as unauthorised.
- Medical appointments are expected to be attended out of school hours or during school holidays; if the appointment has to be on a school day, a child should attend for part of the day, wherever possible.

- Genuine reasons for absence due to illness and medical appointments that cannot be taken out of school hours will be taken into account. However, we may request that you provide medical evidence. A GP letter is **not necessary** to support illness absences, medical verification could include an appointment card, prescription, hospital letter or even a pharmacy note.
- Parents should keep their school fully informed with regards to medical issues that prevent good attendance. If appropriate, and agreed between parent, a senior school staff member and any relevant professional, a flexible timetable may be drawn up in the best interests of the child. This would be reviewed regularly, with the aim of the child returning to full time education as soon as possible.
- Parents should work in partnership with their school to help their child/children understand the importance of attending school regularly.
- Parents should work in partnership with their school and outside agencies to resolve issues relating to non-attendance. Schools will follow the Attendance Concerns Pathway (Appendix 1) when concerns continue after initial contact has been made. It is always the intention of schools to work supportively with parents to secure improved attendance.
- Where attempts to work supportively with parents have not secured improved attendance, schools will make use of Penalty Notices and Prosecutions, in line with section 444 of the Education Act, 1996, which states that “if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parents are guilty of an offence.”
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (Statutory Instrument No 757) explains a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid on 22nd day but within 28 days. Further information and the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct can be found on the Somerset County Council website: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/school-attendance-and-children-missing-education/>
- Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2,500 and / or 3 months imprisonment (see DfE statutory guidance ‘School attendance parental responsibility measures’ for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

Governor Responsibilities:

- The governing body of each school has a responsibility to have an overview of their school’s attendance and to monitor this via the Headteacher’s Report to Governors each term.
- Governors are to scrutinise attendance figures particularly for vulnerable groups.
- In conjunction with the headteacher, governors will determine targets and the impact of the attendance policies and approaches regularly.

Attendance Register Procedure

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Attendance registers are legal documents which may be required as evidence in court under the regulations governing pupil registration. Teachers are required to take an attendance register prior to morning and afternoon sessions, using the appropriate attendance codes (Appendix 2) that indicate whether each pupil is 'present', 'present at an approved educational activity', or 'absent'.

Teachers and office staff are responsible for collecting absence information provided by parents via letter, e-mail or telephone message. If a pupil is absent for one day, without explanation from a parent or carer, a member of the administration team is expected to contact home. If a member of staff is suspicious of a pupil's absence, the teacher and headteacher should be informed. Appropriate action should be taken by the teacher and/or headteacher.

Unauthorised absence is any absence that has not been agreed by the school or has not had a satisfactory explanation from parents or carers (the code O should be used in these cases). Any unauthorised absence will result in contact with home and the pupil's attendance will be monitored by the headteacher and, where appropriate, the West Somerset Attendance Officer.

Lateness: Lateness to school and to lessons is recorded by teaching staff and is monitored as part of each school's pastoral support system. Any pupil arriving late must report to reception to sign in. A late mark (L) will be recorded for any pupil who arrives 10 minutes after the register has closed. Any pupil that arrives after this time will be coded as 'Late after the registers have closed' (U); this impacts on a pupil's attendance and, repeated U coded lateness will be followed up in the same manner as unauthorised absences.

Specific times for Stogursey School-

L= 9.00am-9.09am U= 9.10am or afterwards (am)

L= 1.10pm-1.19pm U = 1.20pm or afterwards (pm)

Lateness at middle schools and West Somerset College is dealt with through the individual school's sanction systems – further information is available from each school.

Pupils who need to leave the school site during the day must be collected by a parent or carer and sign out with the administration staff. Notification from parents is required in order for this to occur.

Any **unexplained absence** from lessons should be followed up by the relevant member of staff at the school. Members of the leadership and pastoral teams may be called upon to locate a pupil. Parents or carers will be contacted, should a pupil go off the school site without permission. We will have to inform the police to ensure our safeguarding duty is fulfilled. This contact is made by the pastoral or office team supported by the headteacher or deputy headteacher.

Absence Reporting (Guidance for parents)

Absence Due To Illness

DAY 1

Parent to phone the school or notify via Parentmail (where appropriate) by the beginning of lesson 1 on the first day of absence to confirm the following:

- Child's name
- Reason for absence ("unwell" is not sufficient – specific reason to be recorded on register)

- Time / date of GP Appointment (if made)

DAY 2 as DAY 1

DAY 3 as DAY 1

Note: If your child does not return to school on DAY 3, then from DAY 4 onwards, the school may request supporting medical evidence – e.g. appointment card/letter; copy of prescription / medication label etc. – before consideration will be given whether or not to authorise the absences (wholly or in part).

DAY 4+

Parent to contact the school before the beginning of lesson 1 on each subsequent day of absence until either:

- Child returns to school, or
- As otherwise agreed with a senior member of school staff.

Contact should be made on a daily basis to update the school on absence. No more than 5 consecutive school days of absence will be authorised by the headteacher without sight of relevant medical evidence to support the absence. Furthermore, parents and carers will be asked to complete a medical consent form if a pupil is absent for over 5 days and no medical evidence has been provided, or if the school decides to query a medical absence. No evidence provided for extended illness is deemed as a safeguarding concern.

Any child accumulating 14 sessions (7 Days) of authorised absence due to illness in an academic year (consecutively or non-consecutively), may be required to provide sight of relevant medical or supportive evidence to explain every absence due to illness from Day 8 onwards. This is to ensure that the school is appropriately meeting the individual child's educational needs.

The coding of any absence from school, for whatever reason(s) given, is ultimately at the sole discretion of the headteacher; therefore the school may request sight of relevant evidence to support the correct coding of an absence of any length of time. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to obtain the relevant evidence to support any absence from school.

Persistent absence is set by the government at below 90%. Pupils with this level of attendance are at severe risk of underachieving so schools will work directly with families and external services to seek to improve attendance. This could include attendance at meetings with senior staff / the headteacher, a formal agreement / contract to improve attendance, discussion at the area Team around the School meeting and a referral for legal processes to be implemented, if the required improvements are not made (see Appendix 1).

Unauthorised 'O' coded absences of 5 days (10 sessions) or more in any 12 week period may result in a Warning Penalty Notice to be issued to the parent(s) / carer(s) responsible for the child's regular school attendance,

When a pupil returns from a long-term absence, they are treated sensitively and given an individual plan allowing them to access the curriculum once again. The school will put into place a variety of strategies to help in this reintegration process. These may include:

- A reduced, or flexible timetable (short term, working towards a return to full time education)
- Alternative Curriculum Provision
- Pastoral mentoring support
- Peer support

- Emotional support
- Counselling
- Specific subject support, or catch-up sessions

Children Missing from Education (CME)

A child is defined as being missing from education if they are of compulsory school age and who are neither on a school roll, or being educated otherwise (e.g. elective home education, or in alternative educational provision). This will include children who have moved into the area and are not on a school roll (including refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers). A child is also missing from education if they are on the roll of a school (or other education provision) but have been absent for ten school days without any contact received from the parent/carer to explain the absence.

In accordance with the Local Authority's CME Policy, prior to submitting a CME referral, the Local Authority would expect a school to make preliminary investigations into the child's absence, which would include

- first day calling of all known contact numbers, including emergency contacts
- speaking to other family members within the school
- speaking to school staff at sibling's schools
- carrying out home visits, if necessary at different times of the day, to ascertain whether the family are still living in the home address

If, following these checks, it is felt that the child is not residing within the home or area and following discussions with the Education Safeguarding Service, a CME referral may be required.

There is a requirement for these checks to be completed swiftly and the Local Authority does not expect a school to wait for 10 continuous school days of absence before starting to make enquiries. If all checks have been completed, the Local Authority may accept the CME referral prior to 10 days of continuous unexplained absence.

Further information regarding Children Missing Education can be found here: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/school-attendance-and-children-missing-education/>

Term-time Leave Requests

The WSEP actively discourages term time leave and requests will not be authorised other than in the case of exceptional circumstances. Parents should apply directly to the headteacher of their child's school through the completion of an Absence Request Form (Appendix 3). Parents/carers have no entitlement to take their child out of school during term-time. Any requests for this, up to a maximum of 10 school sessions (one school day = 2 sessions AM/PM) in an academic year, must satisfy the following conditions before they will be considered by the Head:

- Exceptional circumstances apply – e.g. forces personnel; significant year-round seasonal employment restrictions (a letter from the employer stating to this effect must be provided); unforeseen, exceptional family circumstances etc. **Financial reasons are NOT an exceptional circumstance – please see the Guidance Flowchart (Appendix 3a) for details of the process used by West Somerset schools.**
- Requested in advance of leaving (at the earliest possible opportunity and at least four weeks' notice for planned absence).
- A definite return date provided. Any child that fails to return from an authorised period of term time leave on the expected date will be marked as having an O coded

unauthorised absence. If this unauthorised absence is 10 consecutive sessions, the headteacher will request involvement from the Education Safeguarding Service and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The coding of any absence from school, for whatever reason(s) given, is ultimately at the sole discretion of the headteacher. Therefore the school may request sight of relevant evidence to support an absence of any length of time. **Headteachers will liaise over decisions when there are siblings in other WSEP schools.** If the request meets the conditions for exceptional circumstances, headteachers will then consider the child's previous attendance record, the timing of the requested leave and the potential impact on the child's learning and, finally, whether the child has had any term time leave within the current and previous academic year.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to obtain the relevant evidence to support any absence from school.

If a request has been authorised, **up to 10 sessions (5 days)** will be coded as H on the child's attendance report. Any leave over 10 school sessions will be unauthorised regardless of previous attendance and will be coded as G on the child's attendance report. 10 sessions (5 days) of G coded absence may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.

if the request is unauthorised and the child is still taken out of school, it will be coded as G on the child's attendance report. 10 sessions (5 days) of G coded absence may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Somerset County Council guidance regarding term-time leave is included at the end of this document (Appendix 4). Further information regarding the Penalty Notice process can be found at <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/policies/school-attendance-and-children-missing-education/>.

Strategies for Improving and Maintaining Good Attendance

Pupils in each of the WSEP schools are made aware of attendance statistics through a variety of channels. These could include through assemblies, newsletters, school display boards and electronic media.

Individual pupils are rewarded on a termly basis for 100% attendance with recognition being given to 97%+ at the end of the academic year. Pupils who have significantly improved attendance are also rewarded at the end of the academic year. Each pupil is congratulated and will be recognised through the school's rewards systems.

Attendance is closely monitored by the headteacher and the attendance administrator on a regular basis. This data is reviewed regularly at year group, staff and pastoral meetings and with the West Somerset Attendance Officer, as appropriate.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Attendance is monitored weekly and patterns / trends in absence are identified.

In many contexts, a percentage of 90% or above is considered to be good but when it comes to school attendance, research suggests that pupil achievement can be affected *at all key stages of learning* when attendance falls below 96%. The table below explains this. In addition to the risk of underachievement, the social development of children with prolonged periods, or erratic

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patterns, of absence can be affected. Schools will make every effort to support any child who is experiencing difficulties to overcome these and increase their attendance, working in partnership with parents / carers and other agencies, as appropriate.

Attendance	Level	Days missed in a year	Lessons missed in a year	Intervention
97 – 100%	Excellent attendance – all pupils should aim to be in this group	Up to 5 days	Up to 25	Termly, annual recognition through school rewards system.
96 – 96.9%	Expected attendance	Up to 7 days	Up to 35	Improved attendance also recognised.
94 - 95.9%	Falling below expected attendance	Up to 11.5 days	Up to 57	School will work with parents to support improved attendance, through the WSEP Attendance Concerns Pathway.
90.1 – 93.9%	Below expected attendance – risk of underachievement increases as attendance falls	Up to 18 days	Up to 90	School will work with parents to support improved attendance, through the WSEP Attendance Concerns Pathway and may seek to involve external agencies.
90% or below	Attendance below this level is classed as Persistent Absence and will seriously increase the risk of underachievement	19 days or more	95 or more	School will seek to involve external agencies including the Education Welfare Service.

Attendance figures are monitored by the Government on a termly basis and are published at three points throughout the academic year.

Record Keeping

Registers and all related correspondence will be kept for a period of six years.

Any correspondence regarding concerns about a child's attendance will be kept in the school attendance file. Information related to attendance concerns will be shared with the next school at the point of transfer.

Training

Staff training takes place annually in line with each school's CPD programme.

Parents and carers are informed of the Attendance Policy, expectations and school procedures through the schools' websites, regular school newsletters, and the schools' prospectuses. Changes to procedures and the law regarding attendance are outlined in letters sent home to parents.

Pupils are regularly reminded of the importance of regular attendance by teachers and subject staff. In addition, attendance-related issues are presented during assemblies, as and when appropriate. Coping and time-management strategies are delivered through Citizenship and PSHE activities and with targeted pupils via attendance surgeries and intervention techniques.

This policy has been agreed by all headteachers in the West Somerset Education Partnership and will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1



WSEP Attendance Concerns Pathway

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<p>Attendance drops</p>	<p>Any drop in your child’s attendance will be picked up through each school’s monitoring systems and may result in a conversation with you. This is a supportive gesture and can be shared with your child to reiterate the importance of excellent attendance. Repeated drops in attendance and any early concerns within the first half term of the academic year will be followed up to identify any potential issues.</p>
<p>Level 1</p>	<p>You will receive a letter if there are concerns and your child’s attendance falls below 96% <i>after the first half term of the academic year</i>. This is intended as a further supportive gesture providing you with information that can be shared with your child to improve attendance in school.</p>
<p>Level 2</p>	<p>If your child’s attendance continues to cause concern, you will receive a second letter. Over the next two weeks we will expect to see full attendance in school and, thereafter, they will be continually monitored until it is above 96%.</p>
<p>Level 3</p>	<p>Your child’s attendance is now becoming a serious cause for concern. You will be invited to an attendance meeting with a senior member of staff via a third letter, to discuss how your child’s attendance can be improved. At this point the West Somerset Attendance Officer may also attend the meeting and will expect to see collaboration between school and parent/s, with an attendance review date set in order to avoid escalation to Level 4.</p> <p>If your child has periods of unauthorised absence, the school may issue a Warning Penalty Notice (WPN). If there are no absences during the fifteen school days no Penalty Notice will be requested, however the school will continue to monitor your child’s attendance for the following three months and will be in contact should further concerns arise.</p>
<p>Level 4</p>	<p>The school may make a referral to the Education Safeguarding Service via the ‘Team around the School’ due to one or both of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to engage in attendance meeting/s or relevant contact with a senior member of staff. • Attendance review period failed <p>There are a number of options for Education Safeguarding Service involvement. In all cases the parent(s) /carer(s) will be kept informed, usually by a letter from the school outlining the proposed option. These could include:</p> <p>Penalty Notice (PN) - The parent(s)/carer(s) responsible for the child’s regular school attendance will have 21 days to pay this £60 per parent, per child fine, after which it goes up to £120 per parent, per child. Failure to pay a Fixed Penalty Notice within 28 days may result in a criminal conviction and a fine in the Magistrate's Court of up to £1000.</p> <p>Prosecution - could lead to fines up to £2,500 and / or 3 months imprisonment (see DfE statutory guidance ‘School attendance parental responsibility measures’ for more information: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance)</p>

Appendix 2

Attendance Codes

Code	School Meaning
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B.	Educated off site (not Dual Registration.)
C.	Other authorised circumstances
D.	Dual registration (attending other establishment.)
E.	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
F.	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G.	Family Holiday (not agreed or days in excess)
H.	Family holiday (agreed)
I.	Illness (not medical/dental appointments)
J.	Interview
L.	Late (before register is closed)
M.	Medical/Dental Appointments
N.	No reason yet provided for absence
O.	Unauthorised circumstances
P.	Approved sporting activity
R.	Religious observance
S.	Study leave
T.	Traveller absence
U.	Late (after registers closed)
V.	Educational visit
W	Work Experience
Y	Enforced closure
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Z	Pupil not on roll
-	All should attend/No mark recorded
#	School closed to pupils and staff

Appendix 3

Term Time Leave Request Form		
(A separate application must be completed for each child 4 weeks before the requested leave date for planned absence)		
Name of child:	Class / Tutor:	
Inclusive Dates of Request for Term Time Leave	From:	To:
Exceptional Circumstances (please see the guidance document on the back of this form and ensure that supporting evidence is provided).		
Term time leave has also been requested for the following child(ren):		
Name:	School:	
Name:	School:	
Signed	(Parent	/
Date:	Carer) :	
<p>Term time leave will only be authorised when an application meets the Exceptional Circumstances criteria, outlined in the Attendance Policy and the Guidance Flowchart. Further information will be taken into account if the headteacher agrees that an application meets the Exceptional Circumstances criteria.</p> <p>This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The date of the request and the amount of notice provided • The overall attendance of the child (ren) and whether this is at or above expected level • The time / duration of the request and whether it is within the first term of the academic year or of any new school placement, or it affects exams or the period leading up to exams • Whether the child has had any term time leave within the current or previous academic year <p><u>IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS / CARERS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents / carers whose children are on a school register have a duty to ensure that their children attend regularly and if they fail to do so they may be guilty of an offence under the Education Act, 1993. • If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in a Penalty Notice being issued or legal action taken for poor attendance. 		
For school use only:		

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Current attendance: 97% - 100% Excellent Attendance
96% - 96.9% Expected Attendance
94% - 95.9% Falling Below Expected
90.1% – 93.9% Below Expected
90% or below Persistent Absence
Attendance history: Year: Year: Year:

Authorised Unauthorised
We will continue to monitor attendance and may require evidence following any term time absence.

Signed (Headteacher):

Date:

Appendix 3a



Term Time Leave – Guidance for Parents / Schools

West Somerset Schools are working together to ensure that our children and young people have every opportunity to succeed at school and in later life. Children need to be in school, every day, unless they are too unwell to attend and, in line with Government Policy, term time leave will not be authorised unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Please follow the guidance below if you are considering requesting term time leave. All schools in West Somerset will use this process when term time leave requests are received, to ensure consistency across the area. **Supporting evidence must be provided for exceptional circumstances and, for planned absence, forms should be submitted no later than 4 weeks before the requested leave date. Headteachers may authorise exceptional leave of up to 5 days (10 sessions).**

Are there exceptional circumstances?

- Forces staff returning from lengthy active service abroad
- Police, Fire Service staff being told when they can or cannot take leave
- If a close family member has a terminal illness and it may be a last chance to be together especially if the family member lives overseas
- Parents having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period
- Significant year-round seasonal employment restrictions where **NO** leave is allowed in **any published school holiday**

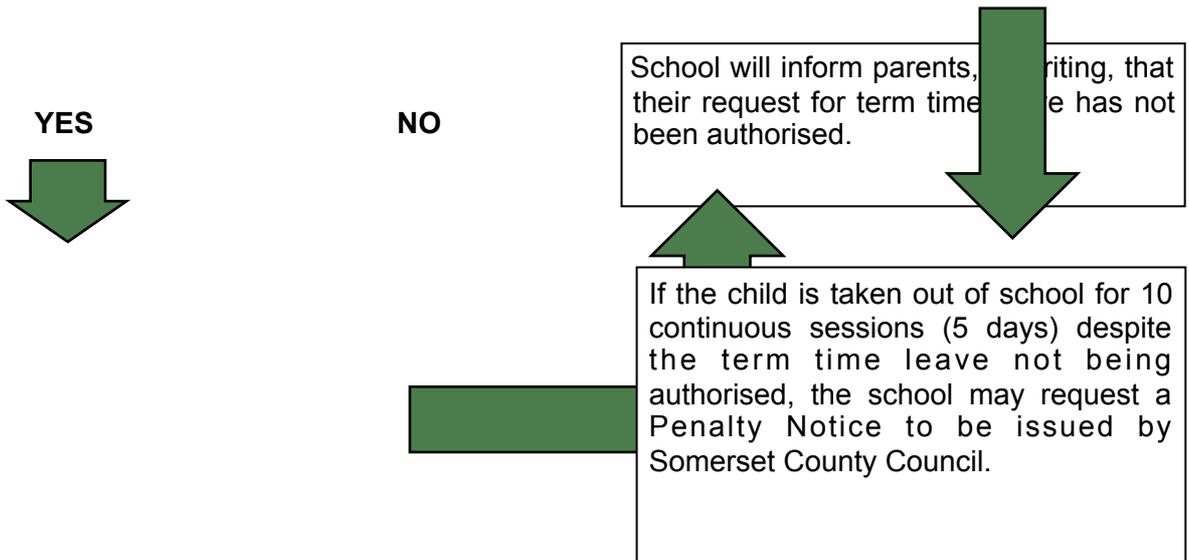
YES



NO



- Does the child have attendance of 96 – 100%?
- Does the timing of the request avoid examination periods and the time leading up to them?
- Is the request made outside the child’s first term at the school?
- Is this the first time that term time leave has been requested within the current and previous academic year?



School will inform parents, in writing, that their request for term time leave has been authorised under the **exceptional circumstances** rule, clearly stating the agreed return date. Failure to return on the agreed date could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued.

Appendix 4

TERM TIME LEAVE

ADVICE FOR SCHOOLS AND PARENTS



Amendments to the 2006 regulations were made by the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#) and come into force on 1 September 2013.

The amendments make it clear that schools can only grant leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances. All reference to a holiday and/or extended leave, including the threshold of ten school days is removed. Any request for leave must be made in writing for the attention of the Headteacher in advance.

There is no formal definition offered for exceptional leave at present by the Department for Education. However, from discussion with the DfE and concerned professional associations it is suggested that exceptional leave may include:

- *Forces staff returning from lengthy active service abroad*

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- *Police, Fire Service staff being told when they can or cannot take leave*
- *If a close family member has a terminal illness and it may be a last chance to be together especially if the family member lived overseas*
- *Parents having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period*
- *Significant year round seasonal employment restrictions (where NO leave is allowed in any published school holiday)(Evidence must be required to support this.)*

Somerset County Council (SCC) supports schools:

- In expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school regularly. Any absence from school will impact on educational achievement, success in later life and longer term health and well being.
- In ensuring the law is upheld. Parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance at school of their child. Schools must explain their stance on term time leave in their attendance policy so parents/ carers are clear on expectations and potential consequences, such as any unauthorised absence including taking term time leave not agreed with the school, can result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent for each child. Any Penalty Notice unpaid is taken to Magistrates Court as failure to secure the regular attendance of their child. If found guilty of such an offence, they might receive a criminal conviction and a potential fine of up to £1,000.

SCC cannot override a school's decision not to authorise any term time leave. There is no right of appeal.

Taking a child on holiday in term time interrupts the learning of the whole class.

Teachers have to spend time helping children catch up when they return.

Parents should arrange holidays for the 13 week school holiday periods.

Schools are open 190 days which leaves 175 days of the year for a holiday. Every day of your child's education is valuable. We hope that, when you have read this advice, you will consider that your child's education is too important to take extended absence during term time.