

Exceptional and Non-Exceptional Circumstances Guidance

All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. Uttoxeter Learning Trust stipulates that it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with or by a pupil if they are over compulsory school age (sixth form). Individual schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account this guidance, the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave **may be granted during term time and suggested timeframes determined by the school are as follows:**

- When a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family member's bereavement, crisis or serious illness (timeframe determined case by case)
- One day of absence for the Funeral of an immediate family member.
- Religious observance, for absences of more than one week a meeting with the Attendance Champion will be arranged.
- Transport is not provided by the LA when it should be (one day).
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer) for absences of more than one week a meeting with the Attendance Champion will be arranged.
- One day of absence could be authorised for the wedding of an immediate family member and the invitation has been provided as evidence (not abroad).
- One-off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the child is participating and is at county standard or above and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence.
- One day of absence could be authorised for an immediate family member's National or Regional award ceremony/graduation ceremony/passing out parade.
- Medical appointments (parents/carers should be encouraged to arrange non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours when possible. If the medical appointment is during the school day, evidence must be provided. Schools should not authorise a whole day's absence for a medical appointment that occurs in the morning – the child would be expected to return to school in the afternoon, and vice versa.
- One day of absence where moving house means that a pupil would not be able to be dropped off or collected and other care arrangements cannot be made.
- A school is able to allow pupils of non-compulsory school age (nursery/sixth form) to be absent for sessions they are not timetabled to attend.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils).
- Transition day for pupils moving to next school / key stage
- Statutory exam/school assessment periods.

Where there are exceptional circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the Chair of Governors before any authorisation is given to the parent.

Evidence would be required in each case.

Examples of circumstances where absence **WILL NOT be granted during term time are as follows:**

- To care for other family members
- Birthdays
- To interpret for other family members
- No school uniform/shoes
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Head lice
- Learning difficulties
- Voluntary non-participation in a school trip, visit or event (other arrangements in school will be made)
- Family holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.
- Holidays abroad to visit a sick relative, except where that person is terminally ill. Medical evidence will be required.
- Weddings abroad – regardless of whether it is for immediate family members
- Family Anniversaries
- Death of a pet
- Family transport problems (e.g. family car unavailable due to foreseen servicing/repairs)
- School refusal
- Recreational activities
- Short-term illness of a sibling or parent within the household
- Severe weather (in cases of severe weather, the school will determine if it is safe for pupils to attend).

(The immediate family is a defined group of relations, used in rules or laws to determine which members of a person's family are affected by those rules. It normally includes a person's parents, spouses, siblings and children. It can contain others connected by birth, adoption, marriage, civil partnership, or cohabitation, such as grandparents, grandchildren, siblings-in-law, half-siblings, adopted children and step-parents/step-children, and cohabiting partners).