

STANBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL



Exceptional Leave of Absence Policy

Head Teacher: Ms E D'Souza

Reviewed: September 2026

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Exceptional Leave of Absence Requests During Term Time

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances. Headteachers cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The School expects family holidays to be taken out of school term times. All such absences in term time are deemed as '**Unauthorised Absences**'.

Requests for term time leave for family matters and holidays must be made prior to making any travel and accommodation bookings. Parents/carers must complete a request form, available from the school office. The school will then decide on each case. As stated above, holidays during term time will **not** be authorised.

Please remember that taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling and that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. If your child misses two weeks of school every year, this adds up to more than two terms over the child's whole time in school.

Headteachers may **NOT** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The decision to authorise leave in term time for exceptional circumstances is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Term-time holidays are generally **not exceptional circumstances**. It is important to understand the circumstances when leave in term time will not be agreed by the school:

- Immediately before or during important assessment periods, statutory tests or examinations, unless the circumstances are genuinely exceptional;
- Where the pupil's attendance or punctuality is already a significant concern;
- Where the proposed absence is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the pupil's learning or progress;
- Where the reason for absence could reasonably have been arranged outside term time.

The school will not apply an automatic attendance-percentage threshold when deciding whether exceptional leave should be granted. Attendance will be considered as part of the individual circumstances of each request.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

The Penalty Notices (England)

The Department for Education's National Framework states that all state-funded schools must consider whether a Penalty Notice is appropriate when a pupil reaches 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school must consider each case individually and should not operate a blanket policy of automatically issuing or not issuing Penalty Notices.

For an unauthorised holiday in term time, support may not be appropriate and a Penalty Notice may be requested, subject to the National Framework and Harrow Local Authority's Local Code of Conduct. Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority or another authorised officer in accordance with the relevant regulations and local procedures.

The first Penalty Notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within a rolling three-year period is charged at £160. A third Penalty Notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within that three-year period; alternative legal action may instead be considered.

Where support is appropriate and has not worked or has not been engaged with, a Notice to Improve may be used in accordance with the National Framework and the Local Authority's procedures. The school will work with the Local Authority when determining the appropriate legal intervention.

Further information can be found [here](#).

Guidance to Exceptional Leave of Absence Requests:

Our school will take into account the following when considering a request for exceptional leave:

- The amount of time requested;
- Age of the pupil and the year group they are in;
- The pupil's attendance/punctuality record;
- Proximity of SATs, Year 1 Phonics screening check, Year 4 Multiplication Check;
- Length of the proposed leave;
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work;
- Pupil's educational needs;
- General welfare of the pupil;
- Exceptional circumstances of the request / purpose of leave;
- When the request was made; and
- Any supporting evidence provided or reasonably requested by the school.

Leave which will not normally be authorised

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booking the wrong dates by mistake
- A booking made by another family member without checking with the school
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays or similar celebrations

- A holiday or leisure trip where the purpose is recreational rather than genuinely exceptional.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis at the discretion of the Headteacher. The school may limit the number or length of leave granted where this is necessary to protect the pupil's education and attendance. There is no entitlement to a particular amount of term-time leave.

Things to remember

- You can only allow your child to miss school if they are ill or if you have advance permission from the school, unless another lawful reason for absence applies.
- Requests for leave during term time will only be granted where the Headteacher considers the circumstances to be exceptional.
- Do not book travel or accommodation before the school has confirmed that leave has been authorised.
- If your child is absent without permission, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the Local Authority may
- consider a Penalty Notice or other legal intervention in line with the National Framework and local procedures.
- If you need help with attendance, please contact the school as early as possible so that support can be considered.

Extended absence and removal from the school roll

Parents/carers should contact the school immediately if exceptional circumstances mean that a pupil cannot return on the agreed date. The school will follow its attendance and safeguarding procedures where a pupil does not return as expected.

A pupil will only be removed from the school roll where the legal requirements for removal from the admission register are met. Extended absence or failure to return does not, by itself, automatically result in removal from the school roll.



STANBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL
Harrow Local Authority
Request for Leave of Absence during Term Time

Pupils attend school for a maximum 190 days each academic year. Full attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. The school regards absences as a very serious concern and there is an overwhelming connection between attendance figures and achievement in examinations. The school will only grant leave in term time in the most exceptional circumstances and evidence will be required in these circumstances. Leave taken without permission of the Head Teacher will be recorded as unauthorised and may incur a fine implemented by the Local Authority.

Please complete this form before making any travel or accommodation bookings.

Name of Child: <i>(please print)</i>	
Date of Birth:	Class:
Full names of parents/carers: <i>(please print)</i>	
Address:	
Tel No:	Emergency Contact No:
Reason for Absence:	
Destination:	1 st Day of Absence
Length of Absence: (school days)	Date due back in school:
<i>I have read and understood the above information</i>	
Parent/carer's signature:	Date:

To be completed by school

Date of meeting with parent/carer:	Leave Authorised/Unauthorised:
Leadership signature:	Date: