



Exceptional Leave Requests

Exceptional leave is the term that the London Borough of Hillingdon uses for absence requests from school, whether it is for holidays for an exceptional reason, to attend a wedding/funeral, visit a sick relative or seek medical treatment abroad.

There is no entitlement to any days' absence from school per academic year and the right for your child to be granted exceptional leave cannot be earned through good attendance. The 1996 Education Act section 444 states that parents are responsible for ensuring that their child (ren) attends school regularly and punctually. The London Borough of Hillingdon advises Headteachers not to authorise exceptional leave requests in school time.

In an academic year, the terms are usually planned so that there are 190 teaching days in total. This leaves 13 weeks (Monday to Friday) and 52 weekends (Saturday to Sunday) where leave can be taken with no interruption to the teaching and learning for the pupil.

Exceptional leave is only granted in extenuating circumstance at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Where a leave request is not authorised the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the register; each day will record two sessions of absence. Schools keep strict records of requests for exceptional leave in term time across all year groups and log the dates and reasons for each request. Patterns of absence from previous years are carefully scrutinised. Requests for exceptional leave are kept in the pupil's school file and passed from school to school, whether it is primary, secondary school or academy.

If you wish to apply for a period of exceptional leave you must do so in writing to the Headteacher explaining the reasons for your request.

Where the leave is unauthorised the letter will explain the implications if the leave is taken anyway, such as missed topics for learning by the pupil, fractured social relationships and the possibility of the parent/carer being issued with a Penalty Notice (PN) by the Education Welfare Service. A lack of response from the Headteacher does not imply that leave has been authorised. Exceptional leave cannot be approved retrospectively.

Where leave is authorised the Headteacher will notify you in writing of the decision and will confirm the number of days which have been authorised. Repeat applications for exceptional leave may result in your case being referred to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Details of the child and parent/carer who take unauthorised exceptional leave can be notified to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120) per child per parent/carer. An attendance panel may also be convened. Penalty Notices will not be issued on more than one occasion. Repeated periods of unauthorised absences will result in summonses to Uxbridge Magistrates Court for prosecution.