



ROGER ASCHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY ON ABSENCE INCLUDING AUTHORISING EXTENDED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL:

If a child is absent from school, parents/carers should inform the school by telephone giving the nature of the illness (this helps us to identify any common illness at the time, e.g. measles, chickenpox, etc.). If a telephone call is not possible, a note is required when the child returns.

Absences are recorded as authorised or unauthorised. An unauthorised absence can be where no communication from home has been received, or if a child is absent for unacceptable reasons. Late arrival at school causes problems and can also be classified as unauthorised absence: Children arriving late are given a late pass and this is recorded.

It is important to remember that schools are not obliged to authorise absence and it is the school's decision as to whether absence will be authorised or unauthorised – this includes absence for any reason, including sickness or medical appointments.

Term time absence for any reason other than illness must be authorised by the Headteacher. Absence during term time will only ever be authorised if the Headteacher considers there to be "exceptional circumstances" for doing so.

The Department for Education (DfE) states that it is for a headteacher to decide what constitutes exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are those that have a one-off, unique and significant value to the child that can only take place at the time requested.

In keeping with the DfE's statutory guidance document on school attendance, the Headteacher will consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advanced notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

The Headteacher will also consider:

- The school calendar (ie what will the child miss in their absence)
- Whether the absence will be a positive and beneficial experience for the child's development.

DfE guidance explains that leave is unlikely to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

In keeping with Local Authority guidance:

The Headteacher will not accept as an exceptional circumstance the fact that a holiday is cheaper during term time.

The Headteacher will also look very carefully at the child's previous attendance record.

- Absence is **more likely to be authorised** if the child has excellent attendance over the last 2 years and if the current year's attendance remains above 95% once the absence has been taken.
- Absence is **only likely to be authorised in rare and exceptional circumstances** if it takes a child's attendance to below 95% and increasingly unlikely, the lower a child's attendance becomes.
- Absence will **never be authorised**, under any circumstances, if it takes a child's attendance below 90%.

Although the Headteacher will consider each application individually, absence will never be authorised under the following circumstances:

- If the child's attendance is or will fall below 90%
- During or in the run up to national assessments
- If the absence has not been requested in advance
- If the family have previously extended an authorised absence beyond the agreed limit.

Please be aware that parents who take unauthorised absence are likely to be referred to the Local Authority and served with a Fixed Penalty Notice.