

Leave of absence in exceptional circumstance

Headteachers may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Bournemouth LA in consultation with Bournemouth Headteachers have agreed the following examples of such exceptional circumstances as a guide for Headteachers when considering leave of absence requests.

Before deciding whether to authorise leave of absence Headteachers will consider

- the impact for the student's academic progress of any absence
- The pupils attendance over the academic year
- Whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams;

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling - Headteachers should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence- up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Serious illness of a close relative - only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Teenage parents responsible for the care of their own child - at the Headteacher's discretion.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the LA - as appropriate. Bournemouth Education Social Work Service can advise schools on individual circumstances if required.
- Time- off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education Social Work Service
- Religious observance - The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs".
- This would include the Islamic Eids, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions. Headteachers may specify that only one day will be authorised at a time (most of the families who request leave on religious grounds are Muslim and the request is for the two Eids).

- Weddings of parents and siblings - weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulties if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Pilgrimages by parents (eg. Hajj). These are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional as children themselves do not perform Hajj, but tend to travel with their parents when they go.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.