

## A request by a parent, that a future absence/period of absence be authorised by a school (exceptional circumstances only)

Schools are only allowed by law, to authorise non-medical absences if requested in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides. A school can only authorise such a request if they are satisfied that there are “**exceptional circumstances**” which apply. However, even if there are exceptional circumstances, schools can still consider any other relevant factors such as previous attendance rates; the ability of the pupil to catch-up on missed work; the wider impact of missing the specified period of time.

Devon County Council’s advice is that schools must be extremely cautious about approving such requests if the pupil’s education is likely to be significantly impacted upon.

Parents should ensure that they know whether the absence will be authorised or not before they go away as an unauthorised absence will likely result in a penalty notice or court summons being issued to each parent for each pupil affected. It is therefore recommended that this completed form is sent into the school **at least three school weeks** before the intended absence.

**To be completed by a parent with whom the child(ren) lives. PLEASE COMPLETE ONE FORM PER CHILD.**

Child’s name: ..... Class/Year Group: .....

Full name(s) of all parents going away with the child listed above:

Parent 1: .....

Parent 2: .....

Period Absent: **From** ..... **To** .....

Number of school days that will be missed: .....

Please explain the reason for the absence (consider that the school will use this to determine whether the “exceptional circumstances” criteria is met.)

You are asked to sign this request to confirm that the information provided above is correct, and that you have read the warning contained in the Additional Information overleaf.

Name of parent completing this form: .....

Signed:..... Date: .....

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### **This portion to be returned to parents/carers**

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child’s attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable,

Pupil(s) name(s).....

Class/Year.....Current Attendance .....% as of ...../...../20.....

☐ Absence authorised from .....to ..... (Inclusive)

☐ Absence unauthorised from .....to ..... (Inclusive)

Signed .....(Headteacher) Date.....

***For school use. To be completed by a member of staff so authorised***

**Date form received in school: ..... Pupil's current attendance rate: .....%**

**Number of unauthorised absences in last 6 months: .....**

☐ **Absence authorised – the school authorises the above absence as requested, satisfied that exception circumstances apply to this specific request.**

**Registration Code .....**

☐ **Absence unauthorised – the school is unable to authorise the absences specified overleaf.**

If request is unauthorised, the main reason(s) are: (please tick all/any that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circumstances not deemed to be exceptional  | <input type="checkbox"/> Current attendance rate is low          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The period covered by this request (length) | <input type="checkbox"/> Number of unauthorised absences is high |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The time of the school year                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)                  |

.....  
Date parent notified of school decision: .....

Signed (member of staff making determination): ..... Designation:.....

#### **Additional information for parents**

If this request is unauthorised by the school, a penalty notice may be issued by Devon County Council. A penalty notice offers a parent the opportunity of dealing with a potential offence without going to court, by paying a penalty. If parents can't afford to pay, or for any other reason do not take the offer of paying the notice within a set time, then the case will proceed to a magistrates court. The provision of penalty notices is set by Regulations and the amount of the penalty, timeframe for payment or payment method are not able to be varied by Devon County Council.

**Parents should note that only one penalty notice per parent per child will normally be issued within a two year period.** Any second 'offence' within a two year period will be referred straight to court.

#### **Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:**

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents

#### **Other examples of absence from school that will not be authorised:**

- Any type of shopping
- Looking after siblings or unwell parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives

#### **WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER**

Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.

Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.

**The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.**