

Leeds Diocesan Learning Trust (LDLT)

Company Number 13687278

Holidays in Term Time

Reviewed and Adopted by Trust Board:

Date of Next Review: August 2025

Responsible Officer: Director of School Effectiveness

The Department for Education requires all schools to implement government amendments to the regulations regarding the taking of Leave of Absence in term-time, which will come into force on the 1st September 2024. The existing regulations give no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Therefore, Headteachers will only be able to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and this will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as a right. The Education Regulations state that applications must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each leave application is considered individually by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family. Application forms are available from your child's school. Headteachers will also welcome early discussion with you around potential applications.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment.
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.

This is not an exhaustive list and Headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. Where a headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which does not fit the criteria, they may refer to the Local Academy Council and/or Trust Board for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final.

Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the Headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Amendments to 2007 Penalty Notice regulations reduced the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1st September 2024, pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices in line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecution if the fine is not paid. It is important to note that this may be applied to both parents where this circumstance arises.

Whilst this policy simply explains changes arising nationally, it is essential to reiterate that taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt your child's educational progress.

