

APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES LEAVE - NOTICE TO PARENTS/CARERS

At Plymouth CAST, we believe that **every day in school matters**.

Good attendance supports children's:

- learning and progress;
- friendships and belonging;
- emotional wellbeing;
- confidence and routines;
- future success and life chances.

We recognise that family life can sometimes present important events, challenges or exceptional situations. We are committed to working respectfully, compassionately and consistently with families when requests for leave during term time are made.

However, parents/carers should be aware that the law does **not** give an automatic right to take a child out of school during term time for holidays or other absence.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, Headteachers may only authorise leave of absence during term time where there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Each request is considered individually, taking account of:

- the specific circumstances;
- the child's attendance history;
- the child's wellbeing and educational needs;
- the impact on learning;
- safeguarding considerations;
- the evidence provided.

Any absence from school disrupts learning and may affect educational progress. Even short absences can lead to missed learning, reduced continuity and difficulty reconnecting with routines and relationships.

If leave is **not authorised** and a child is absent from school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

This may result in the school requesting that the Local Authority consider legal intervention, including Penalty Notices, in line with national guidance and local authority procedures.

We strongly encourage families to discuss requests with school before making bookings or arrangements.

Our aim is always to work in partnership with families, balancing compassion, fairness, safeguarding and every child's right to full-time education.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid after this but within 28 days.

If your child is further absent from school without authorisation within any 3-year period, you will be committing a further offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices for a second offence are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £160, payable within 28 days.

Importantly, fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may also result in legal action. If you are prosecuted and attend court because your child has not been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs.

Absence not authorised by the school may also result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Again, Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs.

Money raised from fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES LEAVE

Please complete this form and return it to the school office at least **15 school days** before the requested absence wherever possible.

Pupil Details

Pupil Name	
Date of Birth	
Year Group	
School	
Class/Form	

Parent/Carer Details

Parent/Carer Name	
Relationship to Child	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	
Do you have Parental Responsibility (PR)	
Please provide details of anyone else with PR including whether they support this application	

Requested Leave Details

First Day of Absence	
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Date Returning to School	
Total Number of School Days Missed	

If leaving home before the first day of absence, please provide departure date:

Reason for Request

Please explain why you believe this request should be considered exceptional.

You may wish to include:

- important family circumstances;
- compassionate reasons;
- significant events;
- unavoidable circumstances;
- wellbeing considerations;
- supporting context the school should understand.

Please provide as much information as possible.

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Impact on Learning

Please explain:

- how your child will be supported to maintain learning during the absence;
- any discussions already held with school;
- any relevant wellbeing or safeguarding considerations.

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Supporting Evidence

Please indicate whether supporting evidence is attached.

Examples may include:

- medical evidence;
- employer letters;
- professional correspondence;

- appointment confirmation;
- other relevant documentation.

Supporting Evidence Attached	Yes ☐	No ☐
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Attendance Information

Please note that the school will consider:

- current attendance percentage;
- number of broken weeks;
- previous leave requests;
- punctuality;
- any safeguarding or attendance concerns.

Preferred Communication Method

☐ Email

Preferred email address:

☐ Telephone

Preferred number:

☐ Letter

Important Information

If leave is not authorised and your child is absent from school, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

In such circumstances, the school may request that the Local Authority consider issuing a Penalty Notice in line with national regulations.

Penalty Notices are issued per parent, per child.

Current national Penalty Notice arrangements include:

- £80 if paid within 21 days;
- increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days.

Further unauthorised term-time absence within a three-year period may result in increased sanctions or prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The school will always seek to work supportively and proportionately with families. However, we also have a legal and safeguarding duty to protect every child's entitlement to education.

Declaration

I confirm that:

- the information provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge;

- I understand there is no automatic entitlement to leave during term time;
- I understand the school will consider this request in line with legislation, DfE guidance and Plymouth CAST policy;
- I understand that unauthorised absence may result in legal intervention.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

School Use Only

Current Attendance %	
Number of Broken Weeks	
Attendance Concern Level	
Previous Leave Requests	
Safeguarding Concerns	
Recommendation	

Decision

☐ Authorised

☐ Not Authorised

Reason:

Headteacher Signature: _____

Date: _____
