

Attendance

Section 30 of the 1980 Education Act lays a duty on every parent/carer of a child of 'school age' to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Attendance is recorded electronically at the beginning of every lesson.

Regulation 7 of The Education (Scotland and Placing Information) (Scotland) Amendment etc Regulations 1993 requires each child/young person's absence from school to be recorded in the school register as authorised: e.g. approved by the authority, or unauthorised; e.g. unexplained by the parent/carer (truancy) or excluded from school.

Family Holiday Not Authorised By The School

The majority of family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as unauthorised absence. However, it is acceptable under exceptional circumstances for schools to authorise a family holiday during term time. Such circumstances may include:

- A family holiday judged to be important to the well-being and cohesion of the family following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events
- Where a parent/carer's employment is of a nature where school holiday leave cannot be accommodated (eg. armed service or emergency services)

A family holiday classified under the 'authorised absence' category should not include such reasons as:

- The availability of cheap holidays
- The availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced during school holidays
- Holidays which overlap the beginning or end of term
- Parent/carer difficulty obtaining leave (with local judgement applied in cases where evidence is provided by the employer that it cannot accommodate leave during school holidays without serious consequences)

Extended Leave With Parent/Carer Consent

Where most family holidays will be recorded as unauthorised absence (see below), extended leave with parent/carer consent will not be considered the same as a family holiday. Extended leave with parent/carer consent will be recorded separately outside the figures for attendance and absence, and include circumstances such as:

- Extended overseas educational trips not organised by the school
- Short-term parent/carer placement abroad
- Family returning to its country of origin (to care for a relative, or for cultural reasons)
- Leave in relation to the children of travelling families

Advice to Parent/Carers

Schools will now follow-up all instances of student non-attendance in order to accurately record the reason for absence using the above coding system. **It would be extremely helpful in this regard, if parents/carers contact school at the beginning and end of the absence period** – indicating their awareness of the absence and reason for absence at the beginning of the period and expectation of return to school at the end of the absence period. Where no information is provided absences will be considered to be unexplained and therefore recorded as unauthorised. **Global texts will be sent to the main contact around 10.30 am on the first day of absence. Therefore, if you know your child will be absent please contact the school as early as possible.**