

## Authorised and Unauthorised Absence – Guidance for Parents

### Authorised Absence Criteria

Headteachers must follow **strict Department for Education (DfE) guidelines** when deciding whether to authorise a student's absence.

#### Understanding Unauthorised Absence

If your reason for absence does not fall within these criteria, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**.

However, this does **not automatically lead to penalties**, particularly if:

- Your child's overall attendance is good
- Your child is making good academic progress
- There is no pattern of persistent absence

In most cases, schools only escalate unauthorised absence if there are **ongoing concerns**.

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### Absences That Can Be Authorised

#### 1. Illness

- The most common authorised reason.
- Schools may request medical evidence (e.g. GP note) if absences are frequent or prolonged.

#### 2. Medical or Dental Appointments

- Authorised only if they cannot reasonably be scheduled outside school hours.
- Proof of appointment may be requested.

#### 3. Religious Observance

- For days officially recognised by the family's religious faith.
- Normally limited to **one day per festival** (e.g. Eid, Diwali).

#### 4. Exceptional Circumstances (*approved in advance by the Headteacher*)

- Examples include:
  - Bereavement of a close family member
  - Family crisis
  - Forces personnel returning from long deployment
  - Wedding or funeral of an immediate family member

#### 5. Approved Sporting or Performance Activities

- Regional or national level sporting events
- Acting or performance (may require a licence and local authority approval)

#### 6. Traveller Children

- When families travel for occupational purposes (e.g. gypsy, Roma, or travelling communities)
  - Absence must still be agreed in advance, with special guidelines applied.
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### Examples of Unauthorised Absence (Usually No Further Action Taken)

If there are **no wider concerns** about your child's attendance or progress, the following absences may be recorded as unauthorised but are unlikely to lead to further action:

1. A one-off exceptional circumstance, such as a **family reunion** or **special birthday celebration**
2. Attendance at **wedding celebrations or family events** lasting more than one day