

Protocol for term-time leave of absence applications in exceptional circumstances for Children We Care For



Corporate Parents

We are all corporate parents, an entity with special responsibilities to Children We Care For (CWCF) and those who are care-experienced, ensuring they receive the support and care necessary to thrive. Oxfordshire County Council have a robust framework to ensure our children and young people feel empowered and capable of overcoming life's hurdles. With an ambitious vision, Oxfordshire aims to be a place where every child and young person can realise their full potential. As corporate parents, we must be the champions of our children and young people's potential. Our commitments are promises to be kept, challenges to be met, and dreams to be realised.

Click here to view our full Corporate Parenting Pledge:

[Corporate Parenting Pledge | Oxfordshire County Council Intranet](#)

Government guidance

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) makes clear that every child of compulsory school age is legally entitled to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where a child is registered at school, parents/carers have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.

As Corporate Parents, it is our duty to ensure CWCF attend school regularly in partnership with their primary carers.

Overcoming barriers to school attendance for Children We Care For

Every child should have the opportunity to realise their potential. Trauma and adversity have a lasting impact on children which creates barriers to education across attendance, learning, behaviour and wellbeing.

Proper engagement by the child's support network with the Personal Education Planning (PEP) process is key to identifying existing needs and emerging needs and putting in place suitable interventions to overcome barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and wellbeing, and maximise outcomes. Social workers, parents/carers and educational settings should reach out to the Virtual School for support on all education-related matters: [Oxfordshire Virtual School | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

Protocol for term-time leave of absence applications in exceptional circumstances for Children We Care For



Oxfordshire protocol for term-time leave of absence applications in exceptional circumstances for Children We Care For:

- Good attendance at school is a crucial factor in children achieving their potential
- Increasing attendance and reducing persistent absence is a high priority for us in Oxfordshire

In exceptional circumstances, requests may need to be made for a leave of absence during term-time. Approval must be sought from both the Head of Service for Children We Care For and the Virtual School Head.

Schools / educational settings should not be approached directly by carers or social workers with such a request.

Role of parents/carers

If a carer believes that there is a need for a child to be absent from school, they should discuss it with the child's social worker and their own supervising social worker in the first instance.

Carers and social workers must not apply for holiday in term time.

Role of social workers

Social workers must notify the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) of the request and escalate any request(s) to their line manager to seek approval before it is progressed to the Head of Service for Children We Care For and the Virtual School Head.

Role of headteachers

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the child's headteacher (or member of staff nominated by the headteacher) to determine the length of the time the child can be away from school.

The Virtual School will always consult with the child's school (headteacher) before any final decision is made and communicated.

For more on the government's position on absence, refer to:

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/121212/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance-19-august-2024.pdf)

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