

Leave of absence

Policy and procedure

Information for parents



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Sources

- RBL Gooi en Vechtstreek Verlof handreiking voor schooldirecteuren
- De leerplichtwet 1969
- Beleidsregel OC&W 21 June 2012
- Handleiding strafwettelijk aanpak schoolverzuim 9 October 2012
- H v Buiten & H Velthoen: Dossier leerplicht, kwalificatieplicht en RMC

1 | INTRODUCTION

The regional school attendance office is often contacted by schools regarding requests from parents for extra leave of absence. This publication is intended to clarify the legal rulings in this area in addition to contributing towards a more uniform approach throughout the region.

The region we fall under covers the following councils.

- Blaricum
- Bussum
- Eemnes
- Hilversum
- Huizen
- Laren
- Muiden
- Naarden
- Weesp
- Wijdemeren

**If you do not live in any of the above then you will fall under a different regional office. However, the rulings should be identical.*

The Dutch edition was specifically intended to assist schools when they receive requests for leave of absence. As it also provides information that explains why a request may or may not be granted we have decided to translate the original Dutch version into a format with our parents as the principal target group.

The granting of permission for a request for leave of absence less than 10 days lies within the responsibilities of the school management. The attendance office has, when consulted, a controlling or advising role.

The contents of this publication are based upon Dutch requirements and are applicable to all schools in our region.

Any questions concerning this publication can be communicated to the school office or made directly to the regional school attendance office:

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2 | RELIGIONS and BELIEFS

For official non-Christian religious festivals, leave of absence can be granted when parents make the request according to the agreed procedure – in writing and preferably at least 6 weeks before the leave is to be taken. In this case, parents are considered to be requesting an exemption from legal obligations (i.e. school attendance).

School management does not need to make a decision regarding permission but is required to assess the request for its validity.

There is no approved list of religious festivals but it is customary that leave of absence for only 1 day is given even if the festival lasts for more days.

The exact date of some festivals is only determined close to the actual festival and this may also differ according to the family's home country.

Whenever considered appropriate, schools are advised to seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether the day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.

Requests for other festivals:

It is not possible to request exemption for the celebration of traditional festivals of other cultures. This would refer to, for example, Thanksgiving, Chinese New Year or carnival. Leave can also not be granted for participation in a pilgrimage.

3 | HOLIDAY LEAVE

In principle, holidays for children attending school should be planned during the allocated school holidays. It is possible, in accordance with Article 11: f & 13a of the *Leerplichtwet* 1969, to take a holiday outside of the school holidays when the profession* of (one of) the parents make it impossible for the family to have a full two week holiday in one of the school holidays. School management is able to decide if permission can be granted.

*Special nature of the profession

Season related tasks or tasks within an occupation with peak periods. Also included is a situation where a holiday during the given school holidays would lead to demonstrable and significant economic problems.

Parents are entitled to request holiday leave once per year for a period of up to a maximum of 10 school days. This period may not be during the first two weeks of a new school year.

It is also not permitted to take a number of short holidays that add up to a maximum of 10 days.

If it is possible for parents to arrange one week during a regular school holiday then permission can be granted for up to one connecting week to make a full two-week family holiday possible and also minimize the leave of absence. .

If parents hand in a declaration from their employer regarding any of the above this should include a clear explanation of why the employer does not allow the employee to take a holiday during the regular holiday dates.

When can permission for extra holiday leave NOT be granted?

- **When it is a second request within one school year**
- **For visiting family in another country**
- **For cheaper travel tickets**
- **If tickets have already been purchased and there are no available options in the regular holiday period**
- **For leave because other children in the family are on holiday (primary-secondary)**
- **For leaving early to avoid traffic congestion**
- **For a sabbatical, world trip or long distance journey**

4 | SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

On the grounds of Article 11 in g and Article 14 of the *Leerplichtwet* it is possible for leave to be granted in special circumstances. The basis for this is an unexpected external situation which is outside the influence of the parents or the child.

Decision regarding the leave:

Total in one school year is more than 10 days – the attendance officer decides

Total in one school year is a maximum of 10 days – school management may decide

Circumstances that fall under this category:

- Moving house: maximum of one day
- Legal obligation whenever this cannot be arranged outside of normal lesson hours
- Marriage of a relative up to the 3rd degree
 - Outside The Netherlands: maximum of five days
 - Outside the place of residence: maximum of two days
 - In the place of residence: maximum of one day

An invitation to the wedding is required to be attached to the request for leave of absence

- 12 ½, 25, 40, 50 or 60th wedding anniversary of (grand)parents: maximum of one day
- 25, 40, 50th employment jubilee of (grand)parents: maximum of one day
- Life threatening sickness of a terminal nature of a relative up to the 3rd degree:
 - A maximum of 10 days

A doctor's declaration is required to be attached to the request

Death of a relative

- Relative living outside of The Netherlands: maximum of five days
- Relative living in The Netherlands
 - 1st degree relative: maximum of five days
 - 2nd degree relative: maximum of two days
 - 3rd degree relative: maximum of one day

A bereavement card is required to be attached to the request

When can leave due to special circumstances not be granted?

- **Orientation for emigration**
- **Celebration of special birthdays**
- **Participation in sports or cultural activities not directly linked to the school**
- **Participation in television recordings or audiences**

By any other requests connected to special circumstances it is up to school management to decide: maximum of ten days

5 | DEGREES OF RELATIONSHIP

Degrees of relation in regards to *the child*:

First degree	- parents
Second degree	- grandparents, brothers and sisters
Third degree	- great-grandparents, uncles & aunts, nieces & nephews that are children of brothers & sisters
Fourth degree	- nieces & nephews that are children of uncles & aunts, great uncles & great-aunts

6 | PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING EXTRA LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The request needs to be made in writing using the form provided by the school. This can be downloaded from the school website or collected from the entrance hall at both the upper school and the lower school

When completed the request form should be given to the office at location, preferably 6 weeks, but at least four weeks in advance of the requested dates.

Any required documentation should be attached to the request.

Where applicable, the school will inform the family of its decision by providing permission in written form or a motivation for why the request cannot be granted or additional information or documentation is necessary.

It is also possible that the school will need to contact the regional school attendance office or will advise the family to contact them.