

Absence regulations

International School Haarlem

Updated July 2026



*At **ISH** our vision is to develop a community of **caring, compassionate, honest, open-minded** global citizens who **enjoy learning** in critical and creative ways.*

*We strive to develop a **positive sense of self** and engage with our world on a **local** and **global** scale.*

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Absence Regulations

1. Compulsory School Attendance

Because it is of the utmost importance that children attend school, attendance is compulsory in the Netherlands. There are governmental rules and regulations on attendance. Students are obliged to be in school on school days in order to get enough educational hours. Of course, students can get sick or will need to have e.g. a medical appointment.

If you need to request a leave of absence for your child(ren) for one full school day, a leave of absence form must be filled in together with relevant supporting documents. This form can be found on our website and sent to absencerequest@internationalschoolhaarlem.nl or handed in to the teacher/form tutor. Please send your request form 8 weeks in advance, if possible, especially for request that involve more than one day.

If there are exceptional circumstances of any kind that make you request a leave of absence, you must still adhere to the relevant rules and regulations for these circumstances as mentioned below. Schools are obliged to follow these as well of course and will be checked on being compliant.

The Head of School is allowed to decide on requests up to and including ten consecutive days. Requests for longer absences will always be forwarded to the educational compliance officer of the municipality of the city you live in.

2. Leave due to religious duties

When a student has obligations to fulfil related to religious festivals, they have a right for special leave. Please note leave can be requested for one day per individual celebration, irrespective of the event's duration. Leave must be requested in advance through a Leave of Absence form. The table below shows the festivals this rule applies to, as directed by the Dutch educational law.

Obligation	Number of days
Chinese	
New Year	1
Hindustani	
Holi	1
Diwali	1
Durga Puja	1
Islamic	
Id al-adha	1
Id al-fitr	1
Jewish	
Easter	1
(Shavuot) Festival of Weeks	1

Jewish New Year	1
Day of Atonement	1
Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles)	1
Shemini Atzeret (8th day)	1
Simchat Torah (Rejoicing)	1

3. Taking holidays during school term

The main rule is: it is not permitted to go on holiday outside the official school holidays. The holidays will be sent to the parents yearly and are mainly allocated by the government; some of them will be decided by the joined boards in our region (e.g. a second week of May break). Our school falls under 'Regio Noord'.

Your child/young person is therefore only free from school during the allocated school holidays for this region. Please see <https://www.government.nl/themes/education/school-holidays>

There is very little scope for granting holiday leave outside the school holiday periods. Under the Compulsory Education Act, leave for a family holiday of up to two weeks (ten school days) outside the school holidays may only be granted in cases involving seasonal work or periods of exceptional business demand. In such circumstances, you must be able to demonstrate that taking leave during the school holidays would result in unavoidable and serious business-related difficulties.

Additional holiday leave will not be granted due to organisational issues within your company. Consequently, leave is never approved solely on the basis of a statement or letter from an employer. Furthermore, additional holiday leave is never granted during the first two weeks of the school year.

It is not allowed to spread several days over the year nor may this holiday take place in the first two weeks of the academic year.

Requests must be accompanied by an employer's statement, explaining why it is impossible for the employee to adhere to the school holidays. Leave of absence requests must be sent at least 8 weeks in advance. This gives time to do research when needed, to contact the compliance officer and to handle any objections.

Please note that organisational circumstances at your place of employment such as timetables and rosters in general nor financially cheaper options outside the holidays will not be considered valid reasons for approving leave. There is no such thing as a 'right' to ten days off school.

4. Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances are beyond the control of parents/guardians and/or the student. A leave of absence form is required, if possible 8 weeks in advance.

You may request time off school under the following circumstances:

- The whole family is moving house: maximum 1 school day.
- Attending the wedding of a blood relative/in-law (to the 3rd degree):
 - In the Netherlands: max. 2 school days
 - Abroad: Europe, max. 5 school day
 - Abroad: outside Europe: max. 10 school days
- Serious illness of a blood relative/in-law (to the 3rd degree) where speed is of the essence and you must immediately depart.
- Death of a blood relative/in-law:
 - 1st degree*, within The Netherlands – max. 4 school days
 - 2nd degree*, within The Netherlands – max. 2 school days
 - 3rd and 4th degree*, within The Netherlands – max. 1 school day
 - 1st- 4th degree, abroad, within Europe – max. 5 school days
 - 1st- 4th degree, abroad, outside Europe – max. 10 school days
- Work related (25, 40, 50 years resp.)
- 12.5th, 25th, 40th, 50th or 60th wedding anniversary of parents/guardians or grandparents – max. 1 school day

For special leave requests, such as taking a round-the-world trip, you should contact the School Attendance Officer in your municipality.

5. Unauthorised leave

The following circumstances will **not** be considered important, leave will not be granted:

- Family visits/reunions abroad
- (Great) grandparents' birthdays nor any other birthdays
- Meeting (great) grandparents for the first time or after a long period
- A very long absence, such as a world tour or a sabbatical
- Cheaper tickets at times other than school holidays
- When offered/won a paid holiday by any third party during other than official school holidays
- Leaving early (or later) to avoid the holiday rush
- Availability of travel opportunities in official school holidays
- Problems due to the spread of school holidays
- Timetables and rosters at your place of work
- Going on trips, camps or trainings organised by various sport clubs, music classes or dance schools etc. during school hours
- Early leave or late start due to sports, music activities etc.
- A combination of all of the above

The Head of School compliance is obliged to report unauthorized leave to the Municipal Compliance Officer.

6. Emergency leave

There could be circumstances that demand leaving as soon as possible, e.g. a sudden loss or a critical medical situation. In that case, it might be impossible to request leave in advance. The school must be contacted via absencerequest@internationalschoolhaarlem.nl soon as possible.

The school will need proof in order to consider this absence being authorised or not. The family will be contacted to discuss the best way to handle the situation.

Absence for longer than ten days will always be reported to and assessed by the municipal compliance officer.

7. Leave due to a medical appointment

Visits to e.g. a doctor, dentist or hospital need to take place outside school hours as much as possible. If this won't be possible, please note the student can only leave school for attending the appointment and needs to be in school before and after the appointment if this time falls in school hours.

8. Leave due to treatment of learning issues

If a student needs assessment or treatment that cannot take place outside school hours, leave can be granted under conditions. The Inclusion team and Head of School Education advise on granting leave; this needs to be underpinned by e.g. an IEP.

9. Leave due to relocation

In case you would be moving and deregistering your child as student of ISH, we ask you to contact our Admissions Team via admissions@internationalschoolhaarlem.nl at least one month before the move.

10. Unauthorised absence

If you prevent your child from attending school without prior permission from the Head of School Compliance (or the school attendance officer), this will be classed as an unlawful, school absence. You are in fact breaking the law on school attendance and are punishable by law. The school head must report this to the school attendance officer.

The school attendance officer will invite you to attend a talk and will then decide if charges are to be made. If this is the case, you will be given the opportunity to explain, whereupon the school attendance officer will send the written charge sheet to the relevant public courts. There, they will decide how to proceed and you could be summonsed to appear before the public prosecutor, and/or potentially fined.

If you have been granted extra leave but circumstances dictate that your child can only return later than planned, the school must be contacted via as soon as possible and not later than the original end date of the granted leave. The school will need proof in order to consider this absence being authorized or not. For example, proof can be a document regarding of a cancelled flight. In case of a delay due to medical circumstances, a statement from a medical professional must be sent.

There are two options:

1. The extra leave will be granted after consideration by the Head of School Compliance.
2. The leave will be considered unauthorized and reported to the municipal compliance officer, who might decide to a sanction.

11.Exemption from education

Under the Education Act, all students are required to undertake all education offered during school hours. It can sporadically happen that parents request exemption of attending certain educational activities. This can only be granted by the board. When granted, the board determines which educational activities will replace the exempted activity.

Exemptions will not be made for regular training activities, lessons or rehearsals of normal sports/music clubs nor will exemptions be made for commercial activities like photoshoots or video shoots.

* **Explanation degrees of blood relation (or in-law)** (from the child's point of view)

- 1st degree: parent/guardian
- 2nd degree: sister or brother, grandparent
- 3rd degree: Uncle or aunt (brother of sister of the parent/guardian), niece or nephew (a brother's/sister's child), great-grandparent
- 4th degree: cousin (parents' brother's/sister's child), great uncle/great aunt (siblings to a grandparent), great-great grandparent