

Absent from school – how to excuse your child correctly

In Germany, school attendance is compulsory. Every child between the ages of 6 and 18 is obliged to attend school. This also means that the child has to attend the lessons in school. If the child cannot attend the lessons for any reason, the parents have to excuse the child or apply for a leave of absence (“beurlauben”) **in advance**.

Sick note in the case of illness

If your child is ill, you as the parent have to tell the school immediately (e.g. by telephone or email) – if possible, before lessons begin. Then the teacher is informed and does not need to wonder where your child is. Following this, you have to send the school a sick note (Entschuldigungsschreiben) with your signature within 3 days of the child being absent from school. This note has to explain why your child could not come to school. Adolescents who are already 18 years old can write and sign their own sick note.

If your child is ill for a longer period of time, it’s best to speak with the teacher. The teacher may require you to provide a doctor’s note (ärztliches Attest). The teacher is allowed to require you to provide a doctor’s note, even if your child is absent for single days.

Leave of absence

A child can also be excused from lessons in exceptional circumstances. These could be important religious festivals or funerals. As parents, you have to request permission for your child to be excused **in advance**. This means that you must write to the teacher to explain when and why your child cannot come to school. The teacher will then write back to you, telling you if it okay for your child to be absent from lessons for this period. Your child is allowed to miss school only when you get the okay from the teacher.

Entschuldigung / Excuse

Datum / date: _____

Sehr geehrte/r Frau/Herr _____,

Dear Mrs. / Mr. (Name Lehrkraft / teacher`s name)

hiermit bitte ich Sie, das Fehlen meines Kindes an folgenden Tagen zu entschuldigen:

I hereby ask you to excuse the absence of my child on these days:

Meine Tochter / mein Sohn heißt _____

My daughter`s / my son`s name is

Begründung für das Fehlen: _____

Reason for the absence (f.e. disease = Krankheit, death in the family = Todesfall in der Familie)

Vielen Dank und freundliche Grüße

Thanks and best regards

(Unterschrift Eltern / parents` signature)

Antrag auf Beurlaubung / Application for leave of absence

Datum / date: _____

Sehr geehrte/r Frau/Herr _____,

Dear Mrs. / Mr. _____ (Name Lehrkraft / teacher`s name)

hiermit bitte ich Sie, mein Kind an folgenden Tagen vom Unterricht freizustellen:

I hereby ask you to release my child from classes on the following days:

Meine Tochter / mein Sohn heißt _____

My daughter`s / my son`s name is

Begründung: _____

Reason for the absence (f.e. burial = Beerdigung, religious festival = religiöses Fest)

Vielen Dank und freundliche Grüße

Thanks and best regards

(Unterschrift Eltern / parents` signature)