# Manager’s abrupt attempt to cancel approved holiday sparks backlash over workplace respect



A recent incident involving a manager attempting to rescind an employee's already approved holiday has ignited a fierce debate about workplace boundaries and management ethics. The scenario unfolded in a text exchange shared widely on social media, particularly through British career expert Ben Askins' TikTok, where it quickly went viral, eliciting widespread outrage.

In this striking text exchange, the manager reached out to the employee while they were on holiday in Mexico, insisting, “I am going to have to cancel the second half of your annual leave this week. You will need to be in the office Thursday and Friday.” This unceremonious demand came as a shock to the employee, who rebutted with the simple yet firm assertion, “But I am already in Mexico?”

Despite the clear implications of the original message, the manager suggested that the employee alter their travel plans, even offering specific flight options. When pressed further, the manager reiterated that this was not merely a suggestion but an order, stating, “I have updated the system,” essentially dismissing the employee's situation with a troubling level of disregard.

The backlash against such managerial tactics highlights broader systemic issues within workplace cultures. Many commenters shared their own experiences of feeling obligated to respond to work-related queries whilst on supposed time off. This incident underscores a growing perception that employees are often expected to be 'on-call' even during their personal time, which can erode vital work-life boundaries. Some viewers captured this sentiment with sardonic observations about the absurdity of such expectations, suggesting that employees might be better off ignoring work communications while on holiday.

The legal implications of cancelling approved leave should not be underestimated. In the UK, once holiday has been approved and commenced, it cannot be unilaterally rescinded without mutual consent. Numerous legal precedents exist wherein employees dismissed under similar circumstances found recourse through unfair dismissal claims. For instance, one case revealed that a dismissal due to a failure to return from holiday during a busy period was ruled unfair, underscoring the importance of protecting employee rights during such challenging situations.

Moreover, experts advise that employers must conduct investigations and ensure any disciplinary action is proportionate. This emphasis on fairness dovetails with guidelines that advocate for clear communication regarding holiday entitlements. In a similar vein, recommendations for handling potential conflicts arising from employee leave further stress the need to establish clear policies and maintain respectful engagement.

Ben Askins, the expert behind the viral post, reinforced these principles by advocating for employee rights in his commentary. He remarked that the situation not only represents a significant managerial failure but also exemplifies a troubling trend wherein organisations impose undue burdens on employees. Observers echoed this sentiment, condemning the behaviour of employers who see themselves as proprietors of their staff's time and well-being.

The discourse surrounding this incident has catalysed a reflection on toxic management practices, with many advocating for a cultural shift that prioritises employee dignity and work-life balance. The urgent call for change resonates with numerous professionals frustrated by the relentless encroachment of work into personal spheres—a sentiment captured poignantly by one viewer’s declaration of disdain for managers who treat employees as if they are conjoined to their roles.

This case opens the door to much-needed discussions regarding the fundamental respect owed to employees and the critical importance of adhering to established workplace norms and regulations. For many, this incident serves not simply as a story about one irresponsible manager but as a poignant reminder of the pervasive issue of employee treatment that requires urgent addressing.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/real-life/article-14755593/Boss-sparks-outrage-absurd-texts-employee-holiday-inappropriate.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.wrigleys.co.uk/news/employment-hr/question-of-the-month-what-happens-if-our-staff-have-to-quarantine-after-travelling-abroad/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/real-life/article-14755593/Boss-sparks-outrage-absurd-texts-employee-holiday-inappropriate.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.davidsonmorris.com/employee-stranded-abroad/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.peninsulagrouplimited.com/ie/blog/dismissal-employee-taking-unauthorised-holidays-deemed-unfair/), [[5]](https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/forum/showthread.php?4458053-Employer-cancelling-annual-leave&p=37001993#post37001993)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/self-isolating-after-returning-to-the-uk-your-employment-rights), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-code-of-practice-on-avoiding-discrimination/code-of-practice-for-employers-avoiding-unlawful-discrimination-while-preventing-illegal-working-in-force-from-6-april-2022-accessible-version)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/real-life/article-14755593/Boss-sparks-outrage-absurd-texts-employee-holiday-inappropriate.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/forum/showthread.php?4458053-Employer-cancelling-annual-leave&p=37001993#post37001993)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/real-life/article-14755593/Boss-sparks-outrage-absurd-texts-employee-holiday-inappropriate.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.peninsulagrouplimited.com/ie/blog/dismissal-employee-taking-unauthorised-holidays-deemed-unfair/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/real-life/article-14755593/Boss-sparks-outrage-absurd-texts-employee-holiday-inappropriate.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/self-isolating-after-returning-to-the-uk-your-employment-rights)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/real-life/article-14755593/Boss-sparks-outrage-absurd-texts-employee-holiday-inappropriate.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.peninsulagrouplimited.com/ie/blog/dismissal-employee-taking-unauthorised-holidays-deemed-unfair/> - This article discusses the legal implications of dismissing an employee for taking unauthorised holidays. It highlights a case where an employee was dismissed for not returning from holiday during a busy period, despite prior approval. The dismissal was deemed unfair due to the lack of detrimental impact on the business and the employer's failure to follow fair procedures. The article advises employers to conduct thorough investigations and ensure that any disciplinary action is proportionate to the offence to avoid claims of unfair dismissal.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/self-isolating-after-returning-to-the-uk-your-employment-rights> - This guidance provides information on employment rights for individuals who need to self-isolate after returning to the UK. It outlines the responsibilities of both employers and employees, including the right to make a claim for unfair dismissal if an employee is dismissed for reasons related to self-isolation. The document also discusses the factors that employment tribunals may consider when determining the fairness of a dismissal, such as public health guidance and the employer's circumstances.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-code-of-practice-on-avoiding-discrimination/code-of-practice-for-employers-avoiding-unlawful-discrimination-while-preventing-illegal-working-in-force-from-6-april-2022-accessible-version> - This code of practice provides guidance for employers on conducting right-to-work checks while avoiding unlawful discrimination. It outlines the legal duties of employers to prevent illegal working and offers practical advice on how to carry out checks in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. The document also addresses the importance of avoiding discrimination during the recruitment process and provides examples of good practice to ensure fairness and legality in employment practices.
5. <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/forum/showthread.php?4458053-Employer-cancelling-annual-leave&p=37001993#post37001993> - This forum thread discusses the issue of employers cancelling approved annual leave. It includes a discussion on the legality of such actions and the rights of employees when their leave is cancelled. The conversation highlights the importance of clear communication and understanding of employment contracts and policies regarding annual leave. Participants share personal experiences and seek advice on how to handle situations where an employer attempts to cancel or alter approved leave.
6. <https://www.wrigleys.co.uk/news/employment-hr/question-of-the-month-what-happens-if-our-staff-have-to-quarantine-after-travelling-abroad/> - This article addresses the challenges employers face when employees need to quarantine after travelling abroad. It discusses the potential impact on business operations and the rights of employees during quarantine periods. The piece also explores the legal considerations for employers, including the possibility of cancelling or rescheduling holidays and the importance of clear communication and policy development to manage such situations effectively.
7. <https://www.davidsonmorris.com/employee-stranded-abroad/> - This guide provides advice for employers on managing situations where employees are stranded abroad, particularly in the context of cancelled holidays. It discusses the legal obligations of employers, including the need to follow fair procedures and consider the circumstances of the employee. The article also highlights the importance of having clear policies in place regarding holiday requests and cancellations to prevent disputes and ensure compliance with employment laws.