

Issues parents need to be aware of

- Should a school not agree to grant leave and the parents take their child on holiday regardless then this will be counted as unauthorised absence - this is the same as 'truancy'.
- The school and the Education Welfare Officer may consider issuing a Fixed Penalty Fine of £50 for this period of unauthorised absence.
- Should leave be granted but the child remain absent for longer than agreed then this extra time will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- Should a child fail to return to school within 10 school days of the agreed return date and there is no contact from the parents the school may remove the child's name from the school roll. The school may also inform its Education Welfare Officer. In these circumstances the parents would be responsible for ensuring that their child was registered at and attended another school. (This would mean parents would not be entitled to receive any assistance with transport.)

Extended visits overseas

Occasionally holidays of more than 10 days to visit family overseas may be unavoidable. In such circumstances schools will recognise the importance and significance such visits often have and will wish to ensure that a positive discussion with the parents takes place beforehand.

Schools will stress to parents the likely educational impact upon their child if extended leave is taken during term-time. Schools will also seek to explain what work the child will miss at school, how this may be addressed on return and how the parents can help the child.

Schools may also consider giving the child work to do while he or she is away.

If you would like a copy of this leaflet on audio cassette or in Braille, large print or other languages please contact

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Family Holidays During Term-Time and Extended Visits Overseas

Information for Parents/Carers

February 2010

Introduction

Children of school-age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Regular attendance is the best way of ensuring that a child makes the most of the educational opportunities which are available to him or her.

When a child is absent from school, he or she misses not only the teaching provided but is also less prepared for the lessons after his or her return.

In particular, parents should avoid taking their children out of school during term-time in order to go on holiday.

There are only 190 statutory school days in one year and 175 days (weekends and school holidays) available to use for holidays. Therefore every school day counts!

Government research suggests that 17 missed school days a year = a GCSE grade DROP in achievement.

Schools Policies

All schools will have a policy about term-time holidays either in the school brochure or in the school's attendance policy.

This policy will discourage parents from arranging family holidays during term-time and state that leave for term-time holidays will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

What are 'exceptional circumstances'?

It is for the headteacher to decide on what might constitute exceptional circumstances and each request for term-time leave will be considered on an individual basis.

Examples of exceptional circumstance are:

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill
- There may have been a significant trauma in the family recently and the headteacher might consider that an immediate holiday might enable the child to better deal with the situation;
- The holiday might be a unique, one-off never-to-be-repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested.

When permission is likely to be refused

- If the child has already had some absence in the current or preceding term;
- It is near or during exam or test times;
- It coincides with the start of the school year;
- The reason given is that the holiday is cheaper in term-time;
- The school believes that it may have a harmful effect on the child's education.

What the law says

The regulations make it clear that parents do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term-time holiday.