

Holiday Requests in Term Time

The Department for Education (DfE) has announced some important changes to the legislation surrounding holidays in term time. From the 1st September 2013, the new law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave of absence during term time will only be considered by the Principal if there are exceptional circumstances that warrant granting leave.

All requests for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances must be made in writing to the Principal who will consider each individual case - a proforma can be obtained from the school office, which must be completed at least 20 day before the intended absence. Only the Principal can determine the number of schools days a pupil can be absent from school if the leave of absence for exceptional circumstances is granted. Parents can be fined for taking their children on holiday during term time or for any other leave of absence without the consent of the Principal.

As a school, we fully appreciate the financial difficulties that some parents face when booking holidays, particularly during school holiday periods, however, from the 1st September 2013 we will be following the DfE guidance.

I hope that all parents will support us on this matter by not taking your child out of school during term time and recognise that the new legislation will bring about increased attendance and improved attainment in our school. Further information can be found on the DfE website at: www.dfe.gov.uk

Please also read the information below:

AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME

IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information below.

WARNING: If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, the local authority may issue a Penalty Notice* per parent per child, or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>Children are expected to attend punctually on the days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, exclusions etc), the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations. Children who struggle with particular subjects may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school.</p> <p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and you may receive up to £120* fine per parent for each child.</p>	<p>The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides. If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in any future proceedings for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>

*If you are issued with a penalty notice by the Education Investigation Service you are required to pay £60, if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days. When a penalty notice is not paid you may be prosecuted without further reference. Remember a penalty notice would be issued for each parent and each child.