

## Termtime Holidays Guidance

### 1 Holidays during school time

Children of school-age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend school regularly. Regular attendance is important, not just because the law requires it but because it is the best way of ensuring that a child makes the most of the educational opportunities which are available to him or her. There may be occasions when a child has to miss school - for example, if he or she is unwell. Any other absences should be kept to an absolute minimum.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by taking your holidays during school holidays. If this is not possible, please avoid taking your child on holiday at times when he or she should be taking exams or tests, in particular when your child is in Year 2 and Year 6.

### 2 Why shouldn't I take my child away during term time?

- It is important that children attend school regularly if they are to benefit from the learning opportunities provided.
- Children who are absent from school due to a holiday in term time will miss out on important learning.
- When a child is absent from school he or she misses not only the teaching provided on the days when he or she is away, but is also less prepared for the lessons building on that after his or her return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement which schools and parents will both wish to avoid.
- The time teachers have to help all the children in a class is reduced if they spend time helping a child to catch up after a holiday.
- Educational experiences in school missed as a result of a family holiday cannot be re-captured later.
- If your child does not attend school regularly, he/she will not be able to keep up with the work. This will have a serious impact on opportunities later in life.

You should not expect the school to agree to a family holiday during term time. The school will carefully consider your request, and they may take your child's current educational needs and attendance record into account. Parents do not have any right or entitlement to expect term-time leave to be granted. Schools can, at their discretion, grant up to 10 days leave each school year but most schools will be reluctant to do this if they believe that your child's education will suffer as a result.

If the school does not agree, and you still take the holiday, your child's absence will be marked as "unauthorised" in the school register. This record of attendance forms part of his/her Report.

Parents should be aware that if leave is granted it will be for the purposes of an annual family holiday – that is, a single period of absence which occurs once in the school year. An annual family holiday is not a series of long weekends nor several two or three day breaks.

Only in exceptional circumstances will a headteacher agree to your child missing school.

### 3 What is an exceptional circumstance?

It is the decision of the headteacher as to what might constitute exceptional circumstances and each request for term-time leave will be considered on an individual basis. A headteacher will not generally accept as an exceptional circumstance the fact that a holiday is cheaper during term time. An exceptional circumstance is much more likely to be a one-off, unique situation e.g. a parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday; or they may be significant trauma in the family recently and the headteacher might consider that an immediate holiday

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might enable the child concerned to better deal with the situation; or the holiday might be unique, one-off never to be repeated occasion which can only take place at the requested time.

The headteacher will also look very carefully at the child's previous attendance record and if he/she is below 95%, it is highly unlikely that the headteacher will agree to authorize any further absence.

Should leave be granted but the child remain absent for longer than agreed then this extra time will be recorded as unauthorized absence. Should a child fail to return to the 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 roll. The school will also inform its Attendance Integration Officer.

**Updated: April 2014**

**Review:**