

ADVICE LEAFLET

Absences taken in term time

Secondary Behaviour & Attendance
Service

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Any absence from school disrupts your child's learning. Whilst an absence may be considered educational, children will still miss out on the teaching that others receive. In addition, children returning from a term time absence generally require additional time from teachers to catch up on the teaching they have missed. This can have an impact on the education of other students in their class.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

Time off for family absences is not a right. Head teachers have discretion to allow up to 10 days absence in a school year for a family absence if they believe there are special circumstances.

Only a head teacher can make that decision, not the Local Education Authority or a parent.

WHAT ARE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES?

Head teachers may agree up to 10 days "holiday leave" in special circumstances such as:

- (a) service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time
- (b) when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES ARE NOT AUTHORISED?

Absences which are taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- a) availability of cheap holidays;
- b) availability of desired accommodation;
- c) poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- d) overlap with beginning/end of term.

HOW DO I REQUEST A HOLIDAY?

The school will provide you with an application form which you should complete and return at least 14 days before you intend to take your absence.

The Head teacher will then make the decision whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

That decision will be relayed to you by the school.

If the absence has been authorised, because of special circumstances, you must ensure you return on the date you have specified. The time off will then be recorded as an authorised absence and coded accordingly.

WHAT IF MY REQUEST IS NOT AUTHORISED?

If you feel you have exceptional circumstances, have you ensured that the school are fully aware of these?

If an absence has been unauthorised by the head teacher or senior leader given this responsibility, the local authority cannot override their decision.

Therefore, if you have any queries in relation to why your absence was unauthorised you must refer these to the school, not the issuing authority.

WHAT IF THE UNAUTHORISED HOLIDAY IS TAKEN?

The school can request the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice. This is a fine of £60 (increasing to £120 if unpaid after 28 days) per parent for each child. If the fine is unpaid legal and court action can follow.

LEGISLATION

This leaflet summarises the guidelines for Head Teachers as set out in the Department for Education Guidance on the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 – Keeping Pupil Registers 2008