

Questions you may ask

Q: Is my child entitled to two weeks' away from school for family holidays?

A: No, the law says you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time.

Under regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, it is only a **discretionary** power for leave to be granted by the head teacher for the purpose of an annual family holiday.

Q: Do I need to apply in advance for my child's leave of absence for the family holiday?

A: Yes. Parents/carers must apply for the leave in writing giving as much notice as possible. Please ask before you book your holiday. Before authorising the absence the head teacher will look at your child's attendance. In cases where the child's attendance is poor, the head teacher may not authorise the absence.

Q: Our family holiday will last more than two weeks', can we ask for an extended leave for the trip?

A: Lengthy absence from school will be detrimental to a child's education. Schools, therefore, will not routinely authorise more than two weeks' leave for family holidays. You will need to explain to the head teacher the exceptional reasons that you feel justify more than the two weeks' discretionary holiday leave. You should also consider how you will plan for your child's continuity of education whilst they are away.

Q: Where can I get further advice on this matter?

A: Always contact your child's school first, as the head teacher is the only person to whom the law gives discretionary power to grant the exceptional leave of absence for the family holiday. You may also seek advice from:

Education Welfare Service

York House

York Road

READING

RG1 8DH

Tel: 0118 9015870

Fax: 0118 9015872

Other Information Services:

www.parentscentre.gov.uk/rightsandresponsibilities

Holidays in Term Time

What you need to know



Reading Borough Council
Education Welfare Service



Why shouldn't I take my child on holiday in term time?

Because your child may:

- Get behind in their school work.
- Get lower results in assignments, tests or examinations because of missed work.
- Miss tests, examinations or deadlines for assignments.
- Feel excluded from their group of friends' when he/she returns.
- May not understand some new work and lose self confidence.

Any absence in term time destroys the continuity of a child's education and reduces their chances of success. Parents/carers are asked to take family holidays during the school holidays wherever possible.

What the regulations say

Guidance issued by the Department of Education 1994 clearly states:

"No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday as a right."

Remember

- Family holidays will only be authorised if your child has a good attendance record.
- If there is a reason why this is not possible, contact your child's school in advance and ask to talk to the head teacher before you book the holiday.
- National studies have shown that there is a strong link between pupils' school attendance and their attainment at school.
- Poor attendance can seriously disrupt pupils' learning especially during the transition from primary to secondary, during SATs, GCSE coursework and exams.
- If you take a two week holiday every year in secondary school your child would have missed 10 weeks' worth of education by the time they sit their GCSEs, assuming they have not had a single day off for illness. If your child misses 10 weeks' of school this could affect their exam results.
- At primary school the same child will have missed 14 weeks' of school. This could have a real impact on the basic literacy and numeracy skills of some children.
- Keeping children away from school for no good reason is a criminal offence.

You should be aware that if you take your child on holiday in term time without the authorisation of your child's head teacher you may be issued with a **FIXED PENALTY NOTICE**.

Information for parents/guardians about FIXED PENALTY NOTICES.

What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?

The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows a Local Authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for poor school attendance. These notices require a penalty to be paid by parents/carers of pupils' who have unauthorised absence from school.

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued if you take a family holiday during term time without the prior authorisation of the head teacher.

What are the penalties?

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued the penalty is £50, when payment is made within 28 days. After 28 days it will increase to £100. Failure to pay within 42 days will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court.