



IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING ATTENDANCE

FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME CHANGES TO THE LAW

There is a concern nationally that children are being taken out of school to go on family holidays in term-time. The Government believes that children's absence from school disrupts learning and undermines educational attainment and achievement. Changes in Government regulations, that you may have heard of in the press, will mean that from 1st September 2013 Headteachers will no longer be able to grant any leave of absence during term-time unless there are specific exceptional circumstances.

Examples of exceptional circumstances which justify approval include:

1. **Members of the armed forces who are returning home from active duties**
2. **Emergency services personnel (Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue) who are unable to take leave at certain times of the year**
3. **Other employees who are prevented from taking family holidays outside term-time, a parent working abroad on a fixed time-period contract**
4. **The death of an immediate family member, e.g. parent, sibling or grandparent**

The amendment to the statutory instruments from the DFES on attendance, will impact on parents requesting a child to be absent from school due to a holiday. In the past, the Headteacher has had the discretion to, in the seven years of schooling, authorize up to 20 days. The new legislation which came into force from 1st September 2013 now forbids this. Absence will only be granted under exceptional circumstances. Any mention of family holidays has been omitted from the statutory regulations reinforcing that a family holiday is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

Taking a child on holiday without permission will now be regarded as unauthorised absence. Parents who do so may lose their child's school place at St. Stephen's Tockholes Church of England Primary School and will be issued with a Penalty Notice by the local authority. The fine is £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the Notice. Where a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the local authority will normally start legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

Retrospective approval can no longer be given.

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