



## Coventry City Council Policy On Term Time Holidays

### Introduction, Law and Regulations

Regulation 12 of the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations 1981, states that schools have the discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of an annual family holiday during term time. This permission is only granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school and only in the most exceptional circumstances should this be granted for more than 10 school days in any one year. Parents and guardians do not have the automatic right to take authorised holiday.

Permission must be given in advance of the holiday after agreed procedures have been followed.

The law states that the holiday must be the annual family holiday and should only be requested by the parent with whom the child normally resides. Only in exceptional circumstances may the amount granted exceed more than two weeks in any school year.

Good consistent school attendance is regarded as essential in securing the desired outcomes for children as itemised in 'Every Child Matters' and is crucial in ensuring that pupils have the best chance of success.

The Government's own guidance on the issue of term-time holidays states:

**'Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday during term-time'.**

If a parent takes a pupil on holiday in term-time without the Head Teacher's permission, or if a child fails to return from holiday by the agreed date, this should be recorded as unauthorised on the pupil's school attendance record. If a pupil has not returned to school within 10 school days of the expected agreed date of return, the Head Teacher may take the pupil off roll.

### Schools

In setting school procedures and a school policy on term-time holidays, schools are advised to consider the following: -

- The pupil's overall attendance pattern (*School may wish to set an attendance level below which a meeting with the Head is required in order to discuss authorisation, for example when attendance is below 85% or 90%.*)
- Holidays already taken in the same school year
- The child's stage of education
- The ability of the child to catch up on the work they have missed
- Time and duration of the holiday
- Proximity to SATs and GCSE exams and course work deadlines
- The reasons for taking holiday in term-time
- Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave by their employer.
- Whether the holiday is in the child's best interest



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It is advised that schools use a holiday request form that reflects the considerations above and that parents/carers understand the consequences of taking holidays in term-time without permission. (This could include the issue of Penalty Notices or removal from roll in the case of unauthorised extended holidays)

It is recommended that schools devise a clear set of procedures to be followed when requests for term-time holidays are made. These should form part of the School Attendance Policy and be communicated annually to parents.

This could include: -

- 1 A formal request form to be provided to parents for completion a minimum of two weeks prior to their holiday and an accompanying information leaflet detailing concerns over Term-Time Holidays
- 2 The form to be returned to a named person: section 8(1) The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 states 'Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school'.
- 3 Authorisation to be refused or approved by the named person mentioned above. A meeting with parents is recommended following receipt of the holiday application form.
- 4 Parents should be invited into school to discuss the request within 5 working days of the request being made. Parents should be made aware of the possible consequences of unauthorised holiday.
- 5 Following a decision about authorisation, those responsible for the pupil's registration to be informed of the correct code to use: H, F or G
- 6 If the absence is to be unauthorised, consideration to be given to a Penalty Notice application and/or a referral to Education Welfare Service or removal from roll if the conditions for this are met.
- 7 Holiday Request form to be retained on the child's school file

### Extended Holidays Overseas

It is recommended that schools ensure that all parents are aware of their policy on extended absence. In the case of ethnic minority families, special care should be taken to ensure that the policy has been clearly explained and understood, taking into account that the parents' first language may not be English and they may be unfamiliar with the education system in this country. Parents should be encouraged to time their holiday to overlap official school holidays.

Parents should be made aware that if a holiday is more than 10 days to visit family overseas, the authorisation of this is at the head teacher's discretion and will take into account the educational needs and stage of the child. This extended holiday must be discussed with the Head teacher. The Head Teacher should stress the educational impact an extended holiday will have on the pupil. It must be made clear to parents that if the holiday is not authorised this could result in, a Penalty Notice being issued or the pupil being removed from roll if they have not returned to school within 10 school days of the agreed date.



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### Information for parents

The City Council recommends that the following information should be communicated to parents at least annually:

- Holidays can seriously disrupt a child's continuity of learning
- Holidays can result in gaps in a pupil's learning
- Holidays can cause disruption to friendship groups
- Holidays should always be avoided at the beginning of a new school term
- Holidays should always be avoided close to examinations or tests
- Holidays should always be avoided during the first year at a new school
- Holidays should always be avoided during the Reception Year
- It is recommended that parents request holiday prior to confirming their holiday booking.
- Pupils who attend school regularly perform better in their SATs and achieve higher grades at GCSE
- Pupils who take 10 days' holiday during term-time can achieve only a maximum attendance of 94.7%, even if there are no other absences through the year. The government recommendation for all school pupils to achieve their potential is 95%+.
- Research suggests that children who are taken out of school during term-time may never catch up on work missed.
- Taking a school child on holiday in term-time may give them the unspoken message that it is acceptable to be absent from school during term-time.