

Questions

Is my child entitled to time off school for family holidays?

No. Parents/guardians do not have a right to demand a pupil's leave of absence for a holiday. The school has a discretionary power to grant leave but is under no obligation to do so.

But can I apply for my child to have time off school for the family holiday?

Yes. Parents/guardians should apply for the leave in writing at least 4 weeks before the trip. Leave will be granted at the school's discretion.

Our family holiday will last more than 2 weeks; can we ask for extended leave for the trip?

Lengthy absence from school harms a child's education. With this in mind, schools do not normally authorise leave for family holidays for more than 2 weeks. If you feel you have exceptional circumstances for requesting an extension you should explain these to the Head Teacher and await the outcome.

Where can I get further advice?

Always contact your child's school first as they are the only authority with the discretionary power to grant the exceptional leave of absence for the family holiday. You can also contact the Education Welfare Officer through your child's school

What the regulations say:

Guidance issued by the Department for Education 1994 clearly states: "Under the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations 1981 the school has a discretionary power for leave to be granted for the purpose of an annual family holiday or an annual holiday during term time. Only in exceptional circumstances may the amount of leave granted exceed 2 weeks in any one year. No parent can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday as a right."

Contacting us

If you require further information on Fixed Penalty Notices please contact us on:

Telephone: 01302 737235 or

Email: welfare.service@doncaster.gov.uk

We are open **Monday to Friday**
8.30am to 5.00pm.

Contact your Education Welfare Officer via your child's school.

Visit our website **www.doncaster.gov.uk** and search for 'school attendance'.



Holidays in Term Time

Information about
Fixed Penalty Notices

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 tests, exams or assignments because of missed work
- Miss tests, exams or assignment deadlines
- Feel excluded from their group of friends on their return
- Not understand new work and lose self confidence

Any absence in term time destroys the continuity of your child's education and reduces chances of success.

Parents are asked to take their holidays when schools are closed.

If there is a reason why this is not possible, contact your child's school and speak to the Head Teacher.

If you take your child on holiday in term time without their Head Teacher's authorisation you may be issued with a **FIXED PENALTY NOTICE**.

Information about Fixed Penalty Notices

What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?

The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced legislation that gave Local Authorities the power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to parents of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school.

In what circumstances will Fixed Penalty Notices be issued?

A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued in 3 situations

1. If a holiday is taken during term time without the authorisation of the Head Teacher or his/her representative
2. If a pupil has unauthorised absence from school and their parent/guardian fails to co-operate with school staff and the Education Welfare Officer to improve the situation
3. If a pupil has unauthorised absence following a warning letter.

What are the Penalties?

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, the Penalty is £60 when the payment is made within 28 days. After 28 days it will increase to £120. Failure to pay within 42 days will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court on the grounds that you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance at school. A separate Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent for each child.

Why has the government introduced this new legislation?

The message of this new legislation is that it is very important that every child attends school for as many days of the school year as possible. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child does not take unnecessary time off school.

What must I do?

Inform school staff when your child is absent from school and give the reason. If there are circumstances where you feel there is no alternative to a holiday in term time you should complete an application form, available from school, at least 4 weeks before the proposed start date of the holiday. The Head Teacher will decidewhether this can be authorised. You must submit this application for authorisation before booking your holiday.

Can I get help if my child is not attending school regularly?

School staff will always offer support to pupils and parents. Education Welfare Officers support schools, parents and pupils so that high levels of attendance can be achieved. The Education Welfare Officer can be contacted through your child's school.

Every school in Doncaster support the message that school attendance is a high priority. We hope that all parents will help us to achieve even better attendance this year.