

Holidays in term time – information for parents

There is no automatic entitlement to take any leave in term time, so parents **must** obtain the Head Teacher's permission before taking their child out of school.

Parents **must** fill in the school's leave request form **prior** to booking or taking any holiday and may be asked to attend a meeting in school.

The Head Teacher can only authorise the absence if there are exceptional reasons for taking the leave in term time.

There may be occasions when, even in exceptional circumstances, the Head Teacher will not agree leave; for example, during SATs week or important transitional periods.

Reasons why you should not take your child out of school in term time

There is strong evidence to indicate that leave during term time can be damaging in the following ways:

- Even brief periods of absence from school can affect your child's progress and attainment, causing them to fall behind and then struggle to catch up.
- For every week of school a child misses, they lose 25 hours of education, which can never be regained.
- If your child is being assessed for special educational needs (SEN), absences can interfere with the statutory process and result in serious delays in receiving appropriate provision.
- Absences can cause problems of social reintegration when your child returns to school, affecting their self-confidence and their relationships with other children and teachers.

Your child gets a holiday from school approximately every 6 weeks, so you should use this time to take your child on holiday.

Penalty Notices

At Higher Walton C of E Primary School, the governing body have made the decision to issue penalty notices for holidays, periods of unauthorised absence and persistent lateness in line with the government's current guidance.¹

The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. A school week is any week in which a school meets at least once. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the registers closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.

Penalty notices are charged at the rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days. Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.

A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).

Further information about Penalty Notices and prosecution can be found on the Lancashire County Council website.²

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

² www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/pay-an-education-penalty-notice