

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.

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

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

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.

If you choose to take your child on holiday in term time without permission, the Local Authority may issue you with a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices

¹At Higher Walton C of E Primary School, the governing body have decided that penalty notices will be issued for holidays and periods of unauthorised absence that consist of 10 sessions (5 days) in a term, or 14 sessions (7 days) over a period of two terms. This decision will be reviewed annually.

If a Penalty Notice is issued, you have up to 28 days from receipt of the notice to pay the penalty. Penalty Notices are issued at £120; however, if paid within 21 days of being issued the cost is £60. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent/carer individually for each child taking leave without permission.

If you don't pay the fine within 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school. Prosecution can result in a criminal record, a community order or a much bigger fine.

Further information about Penalty Notices and prosecution can be found on the Lancashire County Council website at: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/pay-an-education-penalty-notice/>

¹ Paragraph added by Higher Walton CE Primary School December 2023