

Requesting Holidays in Term-time

Holiday leave request forms are available from your child's school.

The key to the appropriateness of the request is whether or not there are exceptional circumstances.

Some examples of circumstances that would be regarded as exceptional are:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Some seasonal/tourism industry workers who cannot take holidays when schools are on holiday
- Parents' employment restrictions
- A significant family event

The Local Authority

The Local Authority has given guidance to head teachers to only authorise holidays when they are for the sole annual family holiday and there are exceptional reasons why they have to happen during term-time.

The guidance says that authorisation should not be given if:

- There are no exceptional circumstances
- The pupil has a poor record of attendance
- The holiday is not the sole, annual, family holiday
- The holiday is close to or during examinations or standard assessment tests
- The holiday is at an important point in a child's education, such as a start in a new school.
- The leave is not requested in advance*

* It is advisable to request leave before you book a holiday. If you take your holiday when leave has not been authorised, your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Holidays in term-time can seriously damage your child's education

The Local Authority wishes to take a common sense approach to holidays in term-time that is fair to all parents and, as far as possible, is the same across Somerset.

The purpose of this approach is to emphasise the importance of school attendance and to minimise those holidays in term-time that are avoidable. In order to do well, children and young people need to attend school.



Holidays in term-time

The Law

The law says that parents/carers may request up to 10 school days in a school year for the purposes of one family holiday. The law also says that the holiday must be in exceptional circumstances, meaning that it is not possible for a holiday to be taken during the school holidays.

The law gives parents/carers the right to request holiday leave in term-time. It is for the head teacher to authorise leave or not authorise it.

Children's education is very important to their future. They are expected to be in school for 190 days a year and should not be absent without a very good reason.

There are 175 non-school days in a year and 14 complete weeks of school holiday. The Government and Local Authority believe that family holidays should be taken during the school holidays so that there is no disruption to children's education.

Children

By going on holiday in term-time:

- Children and young people miss important lessons
- Children and young people can find it difficult to catch up with their learning – some never do
- Children and young people can find that friendship groups have changed
- Children and young people miss out on important stages at transfer to a new school or class and take much longer to settle in.
- Children and young people can miss out on exciting and important educational experiences that are shared by their class mates
- Children and young people can have their preparation for examinations seriously damaged

[Children and young people, who have a 10 day holiday in term time every year, miss two terms of schoolwork during their school career, which is two-thirds of a year. Research shows that children and young people who have a history of absence from school achieve less well than good attenders.]

The School

By going on holiday in term-time:

- The learning of other children and young people in the school is disrupted, as teachers have to find time to help them catch up.
- Planning and preparation for teachers is made more difficult as they try to maintain the learning of others while helping children to catch up.
- Sports teams, drama groups, music groups, etc all suffer as key members are absent.

Parents/Carers

By going on holiday in term-time:

- You could give the message to your children that school is not important.
- If the leave is unauthorised and there are other unauthorised absences on your child's record, you could be liable for a Penalty Notice (a fixed penalty fine) or prosecution for non-attendance at school.