

Family Holidays in Term Time - Essential Information for Parents

What is changing?

From September 2012 all twenty-three schools in Norton Radstock have agreed to adopt a standard practice of not authorising holidays in term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- a family member being seriously or terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday;
- a death or significant trauma in the family and a holiday may help the child cope with the situation;
- the holiday being a unique, one-off, never to be repeated occasion that is time limited.

Reasons linked to financial advantage and family commitments will not be accepted under these criteria.

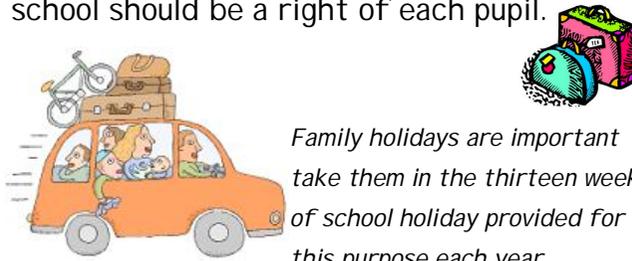
Why are changes being introduced?

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels and also disrupts school routines and the learning of others. Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities.

Each year a number of children are absent from school because their parents take them away on holiday during term time. The absence of pupils seriously disrupts the continuity of their learning. They miss the teaching provided on the days they are away and they are also less prepared for lessons upon their return. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which we must seek to avoid.

A child who has 10 days holiday each year of his/her school life will miss 24 weeks (120 days) of his/her school education. This is in addition to unavoidable absence linked to circumstances such as illness.

Pupils who attend school on a regular basis and are offered access to high-quality teaching and learning will usually leave school with qualifications and access to greater employment opportunities. The link between attendance and achievement is strong, and high levels of attendance at school should be a right of each pupil.



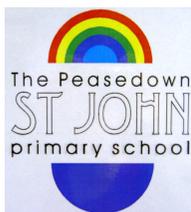
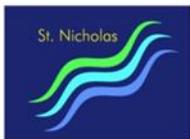
Family holidays are important - take them in the thirteen weeks of school holiday provided for this purpose each year.

What will happen if I take my child out of school for a holiday that has not been authorised by the school?

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Under existing legislation, parents or carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and their absences are not authorised by the school. Depending on circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution.

- Parents/carers who take their children on holiday without the absence being authorised by the school will receive a written warning that legal action will be taken if there are further unauthorised absences.
- If parents/carers take their children on holiday without the absence being authorised a second time, the school will request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice.
- In some circumstances, a Penalty Notice may be issued in respect of a first unauthorised absence, for example where a child would miss an exam or test.

This is a shared policy agreed by the following schools and endorsed by B&NES Local Authority.



Camerton Church School, Clutton Primary, Farrington Gurney CE Primary, Farmborough CE Primary, High Littleton CE Primary, Longvernal Primary, Midsomer Norton Primary, Norton Hill School, Paulton Infant, Paulton Junior, Peasedown St John Primary, Shoscombe CE Primary, Somervale School, St John's CE Primary, St Julians Church School, St Mary's CE Primary Timsbury, St Mary's CE Writhlington, St Nicholas CE Primary, Welton Primary, Westfield Primary, Writhlington School are all working with the Children Missing Education Service to promote high rates of attendance and will be operating the following procedures.

Children Missing Education Service

PO Box 25, Riverside

Temple Street, Keynsham

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Tel: 01225 394241

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