



Changes to the law Term time leave

Changes to the law



Amendments to the 2006 Regulations remove reference to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

As of September 2013, the amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, i.e. the return of a service parent from a tour of active duty. In this instance, a request should be made in writing for the attention of the headteacher in advance.

Dorset County Council state:

“Dorset County Council Children’s Services Directorate, fully supports schools in expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school on a regular basis. Any time away from school can have a significant impact on educational attainment, success in later life and longer term health and well being.

Dorset County Council will be supporting schools in ensuring the law is upheld. In law, parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance at school. Therefore, any unauthorized absence, such as taking holidays in term time not agreed with the school, can result in a Penalty Notice being issued, to each parent for each child. Any Penalty Notice unpaid must be referred to the Magistrates Court as failure to secure the regular attendance of your child. If found guilty of such an offence you will receive a criminal conviction and a potential fine of up to £1000”.

Frequently and historically, taking a child on holiday in term-time interrupts the learning of the whole class as teachers have to spend time helping children catch up.

Parents will now be expected to arrange holidays for the 13 week holiday period.

Inside this flier:

Changes to the law	1
Absence and achievement	2
Our policy	2

Absence and achievement

Clearly there will always be unavoidable reasons for children to be off school. It is important that you understand that the school would not want to be viewed as anything other than supportive with families going through difficult or exceptional times. Schools would not be penalised for the absence of children with genuine reasons for non-attendance.

Research shows that educational progress in Primary Schools significantly starts to drop when attendance falls below 96%. 95% attendance sounds very good, but still means that one day's learning is lost every month. 80% attendance means that one day of learning is lost per week!

Children whose attendance drops to 85% without good reason are now classified as 'persistent absentees' by the government who recognise that there will be a serious impact on the attainment of these pupils.

Children whose attendance drops below 95% reduce their chances of achieving the expected level in English and Maths (at the end of Year 6) by 15% and this steadily declines with lower attendance. Most parents and carers share our desire that their children are successful in their learning and the link between attainment and attendance has long been proven. Good attendance is essential in ensuring educational progress and poor attendance impacts

not only the achievements of individuals but of the **whole school**. Attendance is examined as part of the school inspection process and to gain a satisfactory grade at Ofsted, where 95.3% attendance puts a school within the top 40% of all schools.

St Mary's is always striving for excellence and although in the top 40% of schools for attendance currently, we feel we can always do better. Our attendance figure from September 2012 to May 2013 half term is 96.4%.

*St Mary's
Primary:
Unlocking
potential,
Achieving
excellence*

Our Policy

Every lesson matters; every day counts so taking children out of school during term time should be avoided.

School will track any patterns of attendance that falls below 90%. If a pupil has attendance of 85% or less with no clear and discernable reason, this is flagged up with the educational social worker who may wish to contact parents.

We realize it is often unavoidable to arrange Doctor or Dental appointments out of school hours but we do expect parents to make every effort to bring their children to school before or after the appointment as far as is reasonably practicable. Please write a note to give to the class teacher regarding the appointment or phone the office in advance. Read our full policy on our website under downloads.