

Wedmore First School Academy & Nursery



Term Time Holidays and the Law

Are you considering taking your child on holiday in term time?

STOP AND THINK

You must get the Headteacher's permission before booking your holiday

A child can only have time off during term time for exceptional reasons.

There is **NO** automatic right to term time holiday.

What does the law say?

The Department of Education introduced legally binding amendments to the Education Regulations 2006 for all schools in September 2013. This revised law now strictly limits the amount of holiday that can be taken by pupils during term time and is fully applicable to Wedmore First School Academy & Nursery which has, as part of its legal responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children, a duty to deal with all unauthorised absence from school.

Unfortunately a growing number of families are taking children out of Wedmore First School Academy & Nursery during term-time.

The Governing Body has instructed that authorisation for absence will not **NORMALLY** be given for absence during term time. Holidays should only be taken during the school breaks. Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be given by the Headteacher to take a child out of school.

Exceptional Circumstances

Wedmore First School Academy & Nursery is **ONLY** allowed to grant term time leave in **EXCEPTIONAL** circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances are **VERY** limited in scope and may include:

- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting or returning from active services;
- Fire, police and ambulance services being told when they can or cannot take leave;
- If a close relative has a terminal illness and it may be a last chance for a family to be together (especially if the family member lives overseas);
- Parents having to work overseas for a fixed, minimum term period.

Exceptional circumstances are not:

- Availability of cheap flights/holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Festivals or other one off events
- Visiting family or friends who have different school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of a school holiday break
- Moving house

Each application will be considered on its individual merits, but in most cases the Headteacher will refuse term time leave.

There is no right of appeal

What is the effect on your child?

- Two weeks absence in every school year would mean your child missed four terms of education during their school life. This could seriously affect your child's progress.
- 90% attendance is the equivalent of half a day absence per week.
- 80% attendance is the equivalent of missing six extra weeks of schooling a year.
- Your child may find it difficult to settle if they miss school at the start of a new term.
- Your child may miss important learning experiences. The education of a whole class cannot be disrupted while your child is catching up.
- Your child may miss statutory or school assessment periods.

What if you decide to go anyway?

If a child exceeds 10 sessions (five days) of continuous unauthorised absence on holiday during the course of an Academic year the Headteacher, **with the full support of the Governors**, may request that a Penalty Notice is issued by Somerset County Council's (SCC) Education Attendance Service. The procedure is as follows:

- **Each parent/carer** will be issued with an automatic **Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 for each of their children** who have been absent on unauthorised holiday. You have 21 days, from the date of the letter accompanying the penalty notice, to pay in full and failure to do so will cause the fine to double to **£120 per parent/carer per child**.
- If the fine still remains unpaid the case will be referred to the Magistrates Court for the original offence of unauthorised absence from school. If proven, this can attract a range of fines up to **£1,000 per parent per child** and a **criminal conviction**.

It must be emphasised that this is government policy over which schools have no choice and it applies to **EVERY** school. The aim is to improve overall attendance figures and reduce the lost days of education which can seriously damage your child's future success in life.

Your continued support in maintaining good levels of attendance is appreciated.

Every day counts!