

Frequently Asked Questions for parents regarding holidays in term time and Fixed Penalty Notices.

Q. Am I entitled to take my child out of school for a family holiday?

A. As a parent you decide what you want to do but parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school or the alternative provision on a regular basis.

Principals may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Principal and Governing Body will determine what the exceptional circumstances are.

Q. If we decide to take a holiday during term time what should we do?

A. The parent/carer with whom the child resides must apply in writing to the school. The letter/application must explain the exceptional circumstance surrounding the request for the leave of absence.

Q. What will the school do then?

A. The Principal will determine whether the exceptional circumstance ruling applies, if not he/she may decline the application.

- Only the Principal has the power to approve leave of absence applications.
- School inform parents/carers via school policies as to the use of penalty fines as required by DfE guidance. There are also letters, newsletters and other communications informing parents that they may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice if their child has unauthorised absences in term time.

You will receive a written response from the Principal letting you know if your application has been approved. If the holiday goes ahead after the application has been declined the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Q. What if I have different children at different schools?

A. Each respective Principal makes their own decision and they may have differing views.

Q. What will happen if the absence is unauthorised?

A. The school may apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice and if they do this will automatically generate a penalty fine being issued to each parent in respect of each child whose absence is not authorised.

On your return you will receive a penalty fine from Local Authority Education Welfare Service, the payment periods and how to pay are displayed on the penalty fine.

The Penalty Fine Notice will give you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted in the criminal courts and if you pay the fine, your liability to a criminal offence will be discharged.

Q. What if I do not tell the school I am going on holiday?

A. It is likely that the absence will be unauthorised and you may still receive a penalty for absence.

Q. How much are Penalty Fines for unauthorised absence?

The fine is £60 if paid within 21 days; thereafter the fine doubles to £120 if paid within 28 days. A fine is issued to each parent for each child. ie. if a child has two parents (including Step-Parents/ Partners) - 2 x £60 = £120

Q. Can I appeal the fine?

A. No, there is no right of appeal.

Q. What if I do not pay the fine?

A. You may be prosecuted in the Magistrates Courts which could result in a criminal record.

