

Absence from School

If you are worried that your child may not be attending school regularly then you should make contact with the school and check their attendance.

If they have missed school you will be able to talk with someone at the school about this, and discuss how your child's attendance can be improved.

Further Advice

If you have any questions about Holidays in Term Time or the Penalty Notice process you can contact the Education Welfare Team at West Street House, West Street, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 1BD or telephone **01635 42400**.

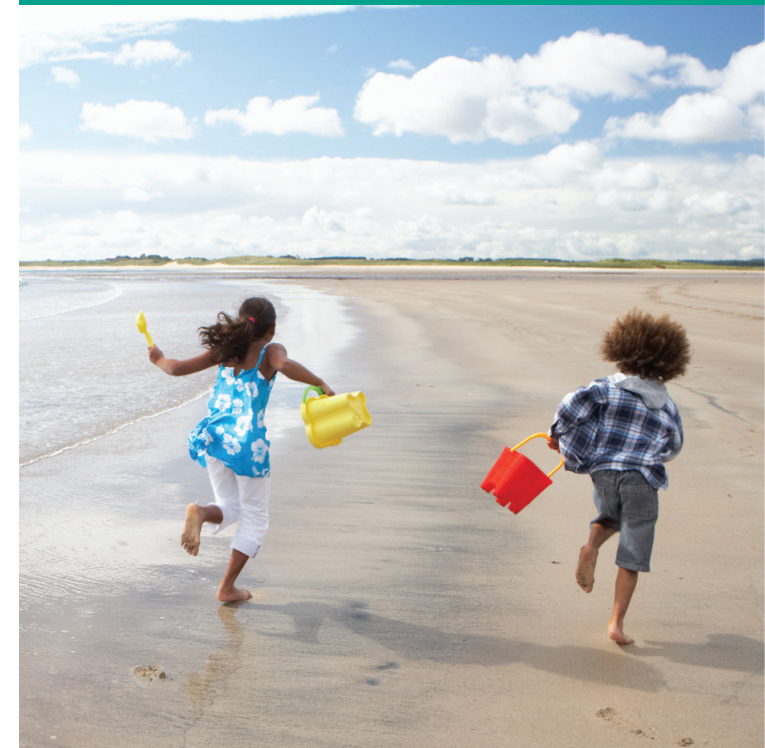
Other sources of Information

- Your child's school (ask to see the holiday or attendance policy)
- www.westberks.gov.uk
- www.education.gov.uk



If you require this information in a different format, such as audio tape or in another language, please ask an English speaker to contact Education Welfare on 01635 42400 who will be able to help.

Holidays in Term Time *A Guide for Parents*



West Berkshire Education Welfare Team

Term-time holidays - the facts

West Berkshire recognises that it often costs more to go on holidays during school holiday periods.

We know that because of this, sometimes parents and carers may ask if they can take their children out of school during term time so that they can take them away on holiday.

It is important, however, that parents and carers consider carefully the implications and impact on their child's education of taking their child out of school during term time.

Taking your children out of school may affect their education, for example:

- They may find it difficult to catch up on work they have missed, particularly if they need to complete any GCSE coursework or if they are due to take any exams or test, for example SATs.
- If children sometimes struggle with subjects such as English or maths, they may find it more difficult after they return from holiday.
- Younger children may find it harder to get back into their friendship groups after a break
- Time missed during the first year at a new school or the beginning of term may lead to problems, for example, timetable mix ups, knowing what equipment to bring into lessons, making new friends.

Term-time holidays - the law

In law, parents and carers are committing a criminal offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school at which the child is registered unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Parents and carers do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for holidays during term time. **You must apply to the school's head teacher.** If permission has been sought for leave and not granted, or if your child misses school without permission, the absence will be marked as an unauthorised absence in the register. West Berkshire Education Welfare Services could be informed about this absence.



If your child is off for longer than the agreed period of time this will also be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised absence can result in a **Fixed Penalty Notice** being issued against you. Failure to pay a Fixed Penalty Notice may result in a criminal conviction and a fine in the Magistrates Court of up to £1000. The West Berkshire Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices is available to view at www.westberks.gov.uk

How do schools consider term time holiday requests?

Schools will judge each holiday request individually, taking into consideration:

- the time of year for the proposed trip
- if it's close to any exam dates
- your child's overall attendance record
- any holidays already taken in the school year
- the age and stage of education of your child
- the ability of your child to catch up the work that they have missed
- the reason why you are taking the time off during term time

While absence may be granted for a holiday during term time, it is entirely the school's decision and is not a parental right.