

Stantonbury School **Guide to term-time absence /holidays for parents**

Why school attendance matters

Stantonbury School wants to make sure that all students reach their potential, and we know that you will want to help us make this happen. We believe that good school attendance is an important part of this.

Whilst we know that sometimes absence can't be avoided, you can help by not taking your child out of school for holidays during term-time. Many parents say that the time their child misses because of a holiday doesn't affect their schoolwork. However, a child who has 10 days holiday each year of their school life will miss 24 weeks (nearly a full school year) of their formal education. This is in addition to unavoidable absences – for instance, if your child is ill. If you are considering a term-time holiday, this leaflet contains some important information to guide you.

What should parents do ?

If a parent is aware of a holiday or a term time absence then we would request that they complete the Leave Of Absence form available on our website www.stantonbury-tove.org.uk
The term time leave will not be agreed unless the School Principal believes this to be an exceptional circumstance.

What does the law say?

From September 2013 the law around holidays in term-time changed. The law now makes it clear that a Headteacher cannot agree to a child being absent from school for a holiday or term time absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is up to you to provide the school with evidence of exceptional circumstances, but only the School Principal can decide if the reason you have given can be considered exceptional and agree the holiday.

If permission for the holiday or term time absence is not given by the school's Principal and you choose to go anyway, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence (truancy) and could lead to you receiving a fixed penalty fine of £60.00 for each child from the LA.

Did you know?

A two-week holiday in term-time means that the highest attendance a child can achieve is **94.7%**

365 Days

in a calendar year

175 Days

are NOT spent at school

How will the School Principal decide?

The School Principal will consider:

- If the reason given for the holiday or term time absence be considered 'exceptional'?
- What impact will the absence have on your child's progress in school?
- Your child's current attendance
- Whether a previous application has been made.
- Whether the term time absence is out of the control of the student or the parent.

The DFE have made it very clear that it is up to the Headteacher and school leadership team to define what would be considered exceptional circumstances.

The National Association of Headteachers define "exceptional circumstances" thus...

"The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are where requests are rare, significant, unavoidable and short!"

What if I ignore the fine?

Thinking of ignoring fines from the local authority? Parents who decide not to pay a Truancy Penalty Notice could be prosecuted for the offence of failure to ensure a child attends school regularly.

A successful prosecution could lead to a criminal record, a very large fine or even jail time: in 2015 19,920 people taken to court for failing to ensure that a child went to school and 75% were found guilty. In total 77% of those found guilty were given fines, eight people were jailed and 553 were given community sentences.

Did you know? When pupils attend school they:

• Can achieve their full potential

• Grow in confidence

• Make new friends

• Have better career prospects

• Keep up with work and homework

