

## Questions you may ask

- Q: Is my child entitled to two weeks away from school for family holidays?
- A: No, the law says you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time.
- Q: Our family holiday will last more than two weeks, can we ask for an extended leave for the trip?
- A: Lengthy absence from school will be detrimental to a child's education. You will need to explain to the head teacher the exceptional reasons that you feel justify this holiday. You should also consider how you will plan for your child's continuity of education whilst they are away.
- Q: Where can I get further advice on this matter?
- A: Always contact your child's school first.

You may also seek advice from your Education Welfare Officer who may be contacted through your local Childrens Action Team:

## Holidays are fine but NOT in Term Time

### What you need to know



Reading Borough Council  
Education Welfare Service



## **Why shouldn't I take my child on holiday in term time?**

Because your child may:

- Get behind in their school work.
- Get lower results in assignments, tests or examinations because of missed work.
- Miss tests, examinations or deadlines for assignments.
- Feel excluded from their group of friends when he/she returns.
- May not understand some new work and lose self confidence.

Any absence in term time destroys the continuity of a child's education and reduces their chances of success. Parents/carers are asked to take family holidays during the school holiday wherever possible.

## **What the regulations say**

Guidance issued by the Department of Education 1994 clearly states:

*"No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday as a right."*

## **Remember**

- Family holidays may only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances and only if your child has a good attendance record.
- You are advised to contact your child's school in advance before booking a holiday.
- National studies have shown that there is a strong link between school attendance and attainment at school.
- Poor attendance can seriously disrupt learning and is strongly discouraged especially at the start of the new academic year and during periods of exams.
- A two week holiday every year in secondary school amounts to 10 weeks worth of education missed by the time your child sits GCSEs. This does not take account of other absences. If your child misses 10 weeks of education this may well affect their exam results.
- At primary school the same child will have missed 14 weeks of school. This could have a real impact on the basic literacy and numeracy skills of some children.
- Keeping children away from school for no good reason is a criminal offence.

You should be aware that if you take your child on holiday in term time without the authorisation of your child's head teacher you may be issued with a **FIXED PENALTY NOTICE**.

## **Information for parents/guardians about FIXED PENALTY NOTICES.**

What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?

The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows a Local Authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for poor school attendance. These notices require a penalty to be paid by each parent/carer of each pupil who has unauthorised absence from school.

What are the penalties?

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued the penalty is £50, when payment is made within 28 days. After 28 days it will increase to £100. Failure to pay within 42 days will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court.