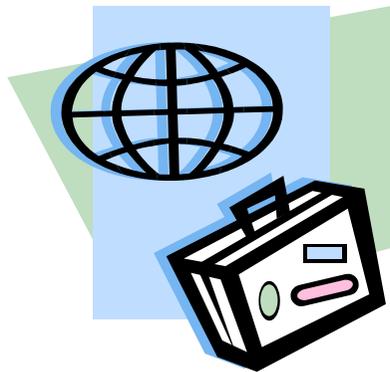




PARENTS GUIDE TO:

Holidays in Term Time



Parent Guide No 3

As you may know, reducing absence from schools is a key government priority nationally and locally. A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt the continuity of their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away; they are also less prepared for lessons upon their return. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which parents and schools must seek to avoid. Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities. A pupil who has two weeks absence in each year of their school life will, by the time they are 16, have missed the equivalent of 4 terms at school.

Under existing legislation, parents or carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and their absences are not authorised by the school. Depending on circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices can be issued by the Local Authority to each parent of each child. The penalty is £100 per parent per child. If payment is made within 28 days the penalty is reduced to £50. If payment is not made within 42 days, parents will be prosecuted in the Criminal Court where on conviction they may be fined up to £1000.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations set out the circumstances in which schools may grant a pupil leave of absence. This regulation applies to all special schools and maintained schools. Therefore schools cannot authorise absence for holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

B&NES Children Missing Education Service work with our school to promote high rates of attendance. In order to comply with the requirement to authorise holidays only in exceptional circumstances, from 1st January 2012 we will be operating the following procedure in relation to holidays in term time:

- Holidays in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- The application must be made by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with, but there is no restriction on *who* the holiday is taken with. (This is a matter for the parents not the school)
- Holidays which are requested for the following reasons **cannot be authorised**:
 - availability of cheap holidays;
 - availability of the desired accommodation;
 - poor weather experienced in school holiday periods;
 - overlap with beginning or end of term.
- Parents who take their children on holiday *without* authorisation will receive a written warning from B&NES that legal action may be taken in the event of further unauthorised absences.
- If parents take their children on holiday a second time during the same academic year, without the absence being authorised, B&NES Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice.

- In some circumstances, a Penalty Notice may be issued in respect of a first unauthorised absence; where a child would miss a SATs test for example.

As a school we will continue to consider every request for a holiday during term time individually. However please understand that the circumstances in which we would be able to authorise absence will be much reduced. We hope that you understand that these changes are being made in order to comply with legislation. Please do not ask for leave of absence for a family holiday in term time if you can possibly avoid it. If you do need to make a request please be sure that the circumstances are exceptional.