

Children and Adults Services

Holidays in school time may be less expensive

... but your child's
education is priceless!

Information for parents



Durham
County Council



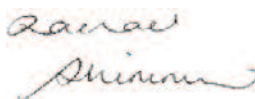


Message from the Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services

Durham County Council is committed to maximising the potential of every child in County Durham. I know that you too want the very best for your child.

Good, consistent attendance at school is crucial to give your child the best chance of success.

We need your support in ensuring that holidays are not taken in school time so that your child has the very best opportunity to succeed. For further advice please contact your child's school. This leaflet provides some information to consider if you are thinking of booking holidays in school time.



Rachael Shimmin

The Law

From 1 September 2013 Government regulations around holidays in term-time are changing.

The changes make it clear that schools may not grant any leave of absence from school during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

This will mean that applications for leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday in term-time will be refused unless parents can demonstrate and prove there are exceptional circumstances relating to the holiday request.

If you take your child out of school without permission this will be recorded as unauthorised absence (truancy) and noted on the child's Record of Achievement and may result in each parent being issued with a fixed penalty fine for each child taken out of school.

School's decision

When deciding whether to allow term-time leave, the school will consider:

- The child's age
- The time and duration of the leave
- The child's record of attendance
- Previous term-time absences
- Whether there are exceptional circumstances relating to the request

We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks, and that is why some parents may ask for term-time leave for their child. However, it is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term-time. There are 190 statutory school days in one year. There are 175 days (weekends and school holidays) available to use for holidays, which would not have a negative effect on your child's education.

We have negotiated a holiday discount scheme with Hays Travel that allows families to receive a 10% discount from any holiday booked with Hays that falls within school holidays. Application forms are available from your child's school. Every school day counts!

Parent/Carer decision

There are a number of things to consider if you decide to apply for leave of absence for your child during term time.

There are times during a school year when a child may experience particular problems because of term-time leave such as:

- Children who need help in certain subjects need to access all the educational support that is offered.
- Some children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates when they return to school.
- Your child may miss out on valuable groupwork with classmates or miss key topics or themes that cannot be repeated and will lead to gaps in learning
- It could embarrass and lower your child's self-esteem to have to ask for help to catch up in each lesson.
- It could be disruptive for other pupils in lessons, when your child needs extra help to catch up.
- Missing "Induction Week", when Year 6 primary pupils visit their new secondary school, to familiarise themselves with the new school layout.
- Please consider the unspoken message you are giving your child, by letting them think it is acceptable to miss school.
- Disadvantages if close to exams or tests, for example SATs in Years 2 and 6 (in May each year)
- Disadvantages during GCSE exams, controlled assessments and final assignments in Years 10 and 11.
- Settling in problems during the first year at a new school, especially at periods of transition, from Year 2 infant to Year 3 junior school and from Year 6 primary to Year 7 secondary school.

Some young people with severe truancy problems told us that it all started when they had a week or two off school for a holiday.

If you believe there are exceptional reasons for your leave of absence request please:

- Discuss with the Head Teacher the idea of taking work with you or how you would help your child to catch up with the missing hours of education.
- Perhaps you could help your child with catch up work when you return.





Every day at school counts!

Please take your child on holiday during the school holidays.

For further enquires please contact:

Ian Shanks

Tel: 03000 265 908

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.

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