

Absence during term time policy (Chippenham Town Schools Agreement)

Principles

This policy has been written collaboratively by all Chippenham Partnership schools and associated Governing Bodies in line with Wiltshire local authority guidance. All schools within the Partnership will adhere to this policy, ensuring consistency and clarity of information to parents.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act (1996) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis; children become of statutory school age the term after which they become 5 years old. Parents do not have an automatic entitlement to holiday during term time.

Wiltshire Headteachers are expected to uphold the law when parents request holiday leave during term time and schools are required to be proactive in discouraging absence. Any absence has a detrimental impact on a child's education. Holiday absence can and should be avoided. Ninety percent attendance is the equivalent of missing half a day of school every week. Children are required to attend for 190/365 days per year, leaving 175 days during which holidays can be taken.

Requesting Holidays

- Unauthorised absence, i.e. absence not approved by the school, will incur a fine from Wiltshire Council;
- Families wishing to request an authorised absence must complete and submit a request form at least two weeks prior to families taking a holiday;
- Holiday applications will not be considered more than 9 months in advance.

Authorisation

- Only in special circumstances will holiday leave be authorised during term time. Such special circumstances will include:
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- Service personnel, or other employees, who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.

Headteachers will not consider authorising a request if:

- Is during assessment weeks, National Curriculum SATs or examination periods;
- Overlaps with the beginning or end of a new term;
- Is due to availability of the desired accommodation;
- Is due to availability of cheaper holidays;
- Is due to poor weather experienced in school holiday periods.

Headteacher's Discretion

Only when the above special circumstances are met do Headteachers have the discretion to authorise up to 5 days (10 sessions) absence for holidays in the school year.

Authorised Absence

Where the above special circumstances are not met, holiday during term time will not be authorised. If parents still take their children out of school then the local authority may issue a fixed penalty notice. This is £160 per parent per child (reduced to £80 if paid within 28 days).

Please see Local Authority leaflet entitled 'PENALTY NOTICES FOR HOLIDAYS TAKEN DURING TERM TIME, S444A and S444B Education Act 1996, Information for Parents and Carers'.

Frogwell, Ivy Lane, King's Lodge, Charter, St Mary's, St Peter's, St Paul's, Redland, Monkton Park, Queen's Crescent, Langley Fitzurse CE, Christian Malford CE, Lacock CE, By Book Valley CE, Stanton St Quintin, Kington St Michael CE, Sutton Benger CE, St Nicholas's, Sheldon, Hardenhuish and Abbeyfield Schools.