



Children and Adults Services

Holidays in school time may be less expensive

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

Information for parents

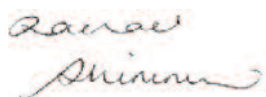


Message from the Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services

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.



Rachael Shimmin

The Law

The law says that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term-time.

In exceptional circumstances however, schools can allow parents to take their child out of class for up to ten days in a school year.

If you take a holiday without the school's permission or if the child fails to return on the agreed date this will be recorded as unauthorised absence (truancy), and noted on the child's Record of Achievement.

Unauthorised holidays may result in parents being issued with a fixed penalty fine.

The school may also decide to take the child off roll. This could result in you having to apply to a different school for your child.

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

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 only 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. Every school day counts!

Parent/Carer decision

What you need to consider:

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

- Disadvantages if close to exams or tests, for example SATs in Years 2, 6 and 9 (in May, each year).
- Disadvantages during GCSE exams and coursework and final studies in Years 10 and 11.
- Settling in problems during the first year at a new school, especially at a period of transition from Year 6 primary to Year 7 secondary.
- 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 that cannot be repeated.
- 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.

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 it's unavoidable:

- 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 50 hours (ten school days) 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:

Tel: 0191 383 3302

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

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