

Brighton and Hove City Council Guidance Letter to Parents

REQUESTS FOR A HOLIDAY/ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Dear Parents/Carers

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning. You may consider that a holiday will be educational, but your child will still miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive. Children returning for a term time holiday are also unprepared for the lessons that build on the teaching they have missed. When teachers have to give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work, other students in the class may miss out on help, and under-achieve as a result. This is a situation that we all have a responsibility to avoid.

The Department for Education only allows a Headteacher discretion to consider an absence/holiday in term time in "special circumstances". Very few requests fall into this category. If you consider that your request falls into this category, you will need to complete a 'leave of absence during term time' form, which is on the school's website. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If the request is not considered to be a special circumstance, and you nevertheless take your child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

In the case of an unauthorised absence/holiday, the Access to Education Team within Brighton and Hove City Council will be notified of the unauthorised absence/holiday taken, and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Please note that such a penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine for £60 per parent per child, which increases to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 21 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days, this may result in legal action.

All requests must be completed on the Brighton and Hove Schools Leave of Absence during term time form, which can be found on the school's website. Letters will not be accepted. This form should be returned to the school at least 14 days before the start of the absence.

In deciding whether to authorise the holiday, the following will be taken into account:

- Reasons given for the holiday
- The time of year/term
- Whether your child will miss tests/examinations or preparations for these.

I hope you will support our efforts to raise attendance and attainment.