



ST CHAD'S PATCHWAY CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Re: Holiday in term times – penalty notices.

Dear Parents and Carers,

To ensure that everyone is aware of the regulations, it is necessary to remind you of expectations regarding statutory attendance and the link to penalty notices, which we notify you of regularly. I do apologise for needing to do this as the vast majority of people try incredibly hard to avoid absence in school time, but as is the way, this letter needs to be sent to everyone.

As I say, for the vast majority of parents and carers, this will never be an issue, but it is important that everyone knows the boundaries which are set, how to avoid overstepping them. Thank you to everyone who has worked hard to work with St Chad's School to stay within the regulations.

A very long time ago now, Education Regulations (2006) allowed Headteachers to grant a leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time under special circumstances. This is no longer regulation and has not been for some time. Below is the body of the text sent at 2 points throughout last year and the same in previous years to all parents and carers.

*As of September 1st, 2013, amendments to the regulations remove references to family holidays and make clear that school **must not grant** any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, and the Headteacher must determine the appropriate number of school days that the child will be away from school if leave is granted for such exceptional circumstances.*

Exceptional Circumstances

Headteachers now are bound to consider every above request individually but the following **will not meet the criteria:**

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays
- Trips, birthdays, special occasions,
- Visiting family/friends that have different half term holidays / to attend family weddings and visits to see family abroad.

What will happen if I take my child on holiday without approval from St Chads?

If you take your child away and approval has not been granted, it will be recorded as unauthorised. This is classed as an offence. Under new regulations, penalty notices (fines) will be issued. From September 2013, amendments to regulations reduces timescales for paying a penalty notice to £60 per child within 21 days or £120 per child within 28 days, bringing in line with other penalty notices. For example a two- parent family taking 2 children out of school for an unauthorised holiday would be liable for a total of £240 if paid within 28 days or £480 between 28 and 42 days. The payment must be made in full – part payments will not be accepted - details of how to pay are printed on the Penalty Notice.

For further information on this topic please see the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence> (Government website.)

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/behaviour-and-attendance/school-attendance/authorised-and-unauthorised-absence-from-school/> (Local Authority website.)

The governors and I would like to stress that this is a national initiative. We also do wish to thank every parent who has fully embraced this regulation and this has already had an impact on the attendance and more importantly, the progress socially and academically of pupils for our school.

This all sounds very heavy handed and in reality, almost every family work their utmost to keep their children in school and this is great for everyone. After all, you have asked us to help you give your children the very best education and the only way we can do that is if your children are here consistently. You will also see from the feedback from open mornings (see website) just how much is learned in the first 10 minutes of a day, the first hour and so on and then imagine that multiplied by a week; the amount of progress and learning is significant.

As such, please note that requests for holidays within term time will be classed as unauthorised and a penalty notice will be issued as described above. This is not a route St Chad's wishes to take, but the regulations are very clear. Unauthorised absences accumulate as well, so taking regular half days off (for example) will very soon amount to more than 5 days and leave you open to a fine.

Again, we do wish to thank all of the parents and carers who have adapted their plans and in many cases made sacrifices to ensure that this regulation is not broken.

Yours sincerely,

Mr D Brown.
Headteacher

