

Requesting leave of absence / Holidays in term time

Clarification of Local Authority and school attendance policy

Dear Parents,

I would like to clarify the school's position regarding holiday or leave of absence in term time.

As a parent or carer you are strongly urged to **avoid booking holidays or visits overseas during term time**. Authorising absence is a policy decision. I have to work within the policy adopted by the Local Authority and school. All school absence is a serious matter monitored by the LA, School Attendance Support Service, Governors and Ofsted and all school procedures are checked regularly.

Parents are reminded that they do not have any entitlement to term-time leave for their children. At Wellington School, we will not usually agree to authorise leave for holidays or extended visits overseas during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances which warrant this. (The reduced cost of a holiday taken during term time will not be considered as an exceptional circumstance)

Holidays are **NOT** permitted in term time. Requesting holidays because it is cheaper to go in term time is not a valid reason, neither are celebrations abroad considered a necessity.

Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the Head Teacher and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. If parents take their child out of school during term time, they can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning Letter and should they choose to take further unauthorised leave they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Local Authority. If a child is absent for long periods, this may result in the child being removed from the school roll and the pupil will be referred to the Child Missing Education Department at the LA. Parents will have to re-apply for their place on return, with no guarantee of a place still being available.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not asking to take children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday during term time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Holidays should be taken in holiday time of which we have plenty of weeks available. These include 1 week Autumn half term, 2 weeks Christmas, 1 week Spring half term, 2 weeks Easter, 1 week Summer half term and 6 weeks in the summer. Taking holidays in term time means children quickly fall behind with their work and may require extra support to catch up.

Parents taking regular holidays **without discussing it first or informing the school** in advance **will** result in fixed penalty fines being issued. This is £80 per child and parent rising to £160 per child and parent if not paid in 21 days. If we are not informed where a child is in school time the child is classed as missing. Parents may request leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. A form needs to be filled out and submitted to the Headteacher with as much notice as possible. A response will be given.

In addition to holiday absence we have a number of pupils who are classed as 'Persistent Absentees (below 90%)'. When a child's attendance falls below 90% the school is required to forward their details to the School Attendance Support Service and they will be taken through the attendance protocols, which include, meetings, target setting and in some cases fines will be issued. A small number of cases are taken through to the prosecution stage.

I hope this explains how the school will deal with requests for leave and any holidays taken in term time. Our attendance policy can be found on our website.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Kahlon
Deputy Head (Attendance Champion)