

Milton CE School

Guidance for Families on Holidays during the School Term

Introduction

Absence during term-time as a result of term-time holidays interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in schools. Cambridgeshire schools and the County Council aim to minimize the amount of time lost to term-time holidays through a policy which actively discourages parents from arranging family holidays during term time and supports schools to authorise absence for such holidays only in exceptional circumstances.

Legal and National Context

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he/she is a registered pupil. Failure to fulfill this duty may result in the Local Authority prosecuting the parents.

Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 gives schools discretionary power to grant leave – up to 10 days - for the purpose of an annual holiday during term time. **But this is not an entitlement and parents cannot expect leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday to be granted as of right.** Should a child fail to return to school within 10 days of the dates authorised the child may be taken off the school roll.

Nationally, Government policy is to encourage schools to minimise the amount of teaching and learning time lost as a result of term-time holidays and schools are now expected to adopt a much more challenging response to requests for leave for such holidays. Schools are also legally required to set targets to reduce overall absence – term-time holiday absence is a particular category of absence on which schools are now expected to focus.

Recommended Practice in Cambridgeshire

Milton supports the recommended practice for Cambridgeshire and asks parents to avoid family holidays during term time if at all possible. Interrupted school attendance impacts on **all** children in the class as time will need to be spent 'catching up' the child who missed the previous learning. Over the course of a term this can have a significant impact on the whole class.

As a Church of England school Milton understands the importance of families in the lives of our children and the need for them to spend quality time together. We recognize that some families are unable to afford to book a holiday during the school holidays when prices may be significantly higher than in term-time; in such cases we ask that parents keep the absence to a minimum.

We also recognize that there may be exceptional circumstances that prompt parents to request holiday absence during term time. Such circumstances might include:

- *a parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday;*

- *there has recently been a death or significant other trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation;*
- *the holiday is a unique, one-off, never-to-be-repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested.*

School will not, as a rule authorise holiday absence:

- if a child's attendance record over the previous 20 week period is less than 95% - even if any previous absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness;
- during September when classroom routines and new groupings are being established
- if the period of leave coincides with tests, SATs, or other significant events in the school calendar
- if less than two weeks notice is given.

Extended Visits Overseas

Occasionally holidays of more than 10 days to family overseas may be unavoidable. In such circumstances Milton would want to recognize the importance and significance such visits have and would wish to ensure that a positive discussion with the parents takes place beforehand. If at all possible we would ask that such holidays are taken in conjunction with half term and school holiday breaks.

Holiday Forms

If parents are unable to avoid taking a holiday in during school time they will need to complete a holiday form which is available from the school office. This needs to be submitted 10 days before the requested absence. If leave is granted it will be for only one holiday in any one school year.

Each request will be considered individually, taking account the child's age, the time of year and the child's previous attendance record. Should a child fail to return to school within 10 days of the dates authorised the child may be taken off the school roll. The parents would then need to make a fresh application for a place at Milton; there would not be a guarantee that a place would available.

November 2008