

Dear Parent/Carer,

Leave or holidays requested in term time-“ Every Lesson Counts’

My purpose in writing to all parents of primary age children is to stress the importance of school attendance and to ask for your support in not taking your child out of school during term time.

Every lesson really does count for your child and children can quickly fall behind if even one day is missed- This includes days taken at leave in term time and long weekends. Catching up even a little lost time in school can be difficult for children; they may become more reluctant to attend and are more likely to be lonely or bullied. If poor attendance habits develop at primary school, children can struggle at secondary school or be at increased risk of harm.

Decisions to authorise leave during term time is at the discretion of individual Headteachers. If you are considering requesting leave for your child in term time, Headteachers will take the South Gloucestershire Council guidance into consideration:

- Parents are strongly urged not to take family holidays during term time.
- Requests for leave should not be authorised in term 1 (September/October) when pupils are settling into the new academic year or in term 5 (April/May) when national assessments are taking place.
- Leave should not be authorised at any time when internal school assessments are taking place – these times will vary and each school will publish these dates in advance.
- Parents requesting leave must do so in writing prior to departure, at least 4 weeks. The parent must include specific reasons why the leave is requested during term time.
- Schools may authorise up to 10 days leave within an academic year provided that there is no other concern about the child's attendance. Where there is concern, the leave will not be authorised. Headteachers have discretion whether or not to authorise leave so you should check your child's school policy before any leave is booked.
- Leave for longer than 10 days should not normally be authorised. If such leave is requested then the Governing Body should consider the application and may authorise it only in exceptional circumstances.

Any unauthorised leave in term time of more than 10 sessions (5 days) in one term may result in a Penalty Notice being issued. The Notice is a fine of £50 -£100 per parent, per child. If the Notice remains unpaid after 42 days the local authority will prosecute the parent for the non-attendance of the child at school.

For further information about leave in term time please contact your child's school or the Education Welfare Service on 01454 863377 or e-mail on edricationwelfare@southglos.gov.uk