



LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

St Francis follows the rules set by Government, which came into effect from September 2013 with regards holidays during term time.

In September 2013 the Department for Education (DFE) announced significant changes to the regulations authorising leave of absence for pupils in school. A child can now only have time off during term time for exceptional reasons and only if their attendance is at a suitable level (current and previous year's attendance will be taken into account).

North Somerset Local Authority expects all children to attend school regularly and punctually. It expects families not to take children out of school during term time for family holidays. Exceptional circumstances now only include:

- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Exceptional significant family events or circumstances (to be considered on an individual basis).

Families who choose to ignore the guidelines and take their children out of school during term time (unauthorised absence) may be subject to a penalty notice (fine). Both parents will be liable to receive the penalty notice for all children in the family who attend the school and whose attendance is recorded as unauthorised. For example, for a family with three children with two parents, the penalty notice (£60) will be effectively issued six times, giving a total of £360 if paid within 21 days. If this is not paid within 21 days, the fine is doubled to £120 per parent per child.

The school has a target of 97% attendance, and every child's attendance and absence affects this figure. A child whose attendance falls to 90% is missing the equivalent of ½ a day per week; a child whose attendance falls below 85% is classed by the DFE as a persistent absentee; a child whose attendance falls below 80% is missing the equivalent of the summer holiday twice in one year. Regular absence from school has a significant impact on a child's achievement and progress and is very difficult to 'make-up'. If a child's attendance is below 97% a request for absence will not be authorised.

It is essential that all families think carefully about the impact these changes will have on their personal circumstances. Any request for leave of absence during term time must be made by completing the yellow 'Absence Request for Exceptional Circumstances' form, before booking any holiday and allow sufficient time for the head teacher to respond.

Thanking you for your support in this.