



HOLIDAYS IN TERM-TIME POLICY

Archibald First School

Children of school age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Regular attendance is important, not just because the law requires it but also because it is the best way of ensuring children make the most of the educational opportunities available to them.

When a child is absent from school, he or she misses not only the teaching provided on the days when absent but is also less prepared for the lesson building on this when returning. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which Head teachers and parents will both wish to avoid.

There may be occasions when a child has to miss school – for example, if unwell. Any other absences must be kept to an absolute minimum. In particular, parents should avoid taking children out of school during term time in order to go on holiday.

What the Law says

The regulations make it clear that parents do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term-time holiday. Indeed, at Archibald First School all holiday requests will be refused. Leave of absence will only be authorised under exceptional circumstances.

The government's own guidance on the issue of term-time holiday states: 'Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday in term'.

How Archibald First School Head teacher and Governors deal with requests for term-time holidays.

Taking this guidance into consideration, the Governing Body of Archibald First School has ruled that leave for term-time holidays will not be granted. Leave of absence may be authorised only if there are exceptional circumstances which might justify it.

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What are 'exceptional circumstances'?

The Head teacher will not accept as an exceptional circumstance the fact that a holiday is cheaper during term time.

An exceptional circumstance is much more likely to be a **one-off**, unique situation e.g. a parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill. There may have been a significant trauma in the family recently and the Head teacher might consider that an immediate break might enable the child concerned to better deal with the situation. In some cases, a parent's employer might restrict holidays to a certain time-period. In these circumstances, the Head teacher will ask for written confirmation from the employer.

The Head teacher will also look very carefully at the child's previous attendance record and should she have concerns, for example should the child's average attendance be below 95%, it is highly unlikely that the Head teacher will agree to authorise any further absence.

If a leave of absence request is granted under exceptional circumstances, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school.

Issues parents need to be aware of

Should a school not agree to grant leave and parents take their child on holiday in spite of this then this will be counted as unauthorised absence – this is the same as 'truancy' (Schools are now legally required to record, as a specific category, all absences that occur because of family holidays taken without authorisation). Any such holidays could result in parents receiving a fine.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised.

The regulations **do not** allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Why term-time holidays should be avoided

Head teachers recognise that parent's circumstances (financial position, working commitments, etc) vary enormously, but they are nonetheless required to ensure that children only miss school if it is absolutely unavoidable.

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NB – Throughout this leaflet reference to parent(s) should be understood to include carer(s).

Monitoring and review

This policy was reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body. The policy will be formally reviewed by the Leadership Support Committee every 3 years.

Date of last review: Spring 2020

Date of next review: Spring 2023

Associated Documents

- Archibald First School Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Archibald First School Home School Agreement
- School attendance - DfE Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities: July 2019
- School attendance parental responsibility measures - DfE Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police: January 2015