

PENALTY NOTICES for non-school attendance

Under existing legislation, parents or carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and their absences are not authorised by the school. Depending on circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced the Penalty Notice as an alternative to prosecution.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. The penalty is £50 per parent per child. If payment is not made within 28 days the penalty rises to £100. If payment is not made within 42 days parents will be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court where, on conviction, they may be fined up to £1000.

If you wish to contact the Education Welfare Officer for your child's school, you may do so by leaving a message for him / her at your child's school.

Gloucestershire County Council Education Welfare Service

Gloucester North Locality
Quayside House
Quay Street
Gloucester
GL1 2JU

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Education Welfare Service

FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

ADVICE FOR PARENTS

Family Holidays in Term Time

Each year a number of children are absent from school because their parents take them away on holiday during term time.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt the continuity of their learning.

Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away; they are also less prepared for lessons upon their return.

Consequently there is a risk of under achievement, which we must seek to avoid.

Many parents say that the time their child misses because of a holiday doesn't affect their school work. However, a child who has 10 days holiday each year of their school life will miss 24 weeks (most of a school year) of their formal education. This is in addition to unavoidable absences – for instance, if your child is ill.

In Gloucestershire, schools and the Education Welfare Service are working together to promote high rates of attendance and operate the following procedures:

- Parents have access to information about the school's policy regarding Family Holidays in Term Time.
- Parents who take their children on holiday without the absence being authorised by the school may receive a written warning that legal action may be taken if there are further unauthorised absences.
- If parents take their children on holiday without the absence being authorised a second time, the school may request the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice.
- In some circumstances, a Penalty Notice may be issued in respect of a first unauthorised absence; where a child would miss an exam or test for example.

Please do not ask for leave of absence for a family holiday in term time if you can possibly avoid it.

If you do have to ask for permission to take your child out of school for a holiday:

- Try to avoid periods when your child is preparing for or taking examinations or important tests.
- Give at least two weeks notice of any planned absence.

Every request for a holiday in term time will be considered individually. However, the most important consideration will be the effect that such an absence will have on your child's education.

Schools do not have to agree to absence for a holiday and will usually only authorise absence for holidays in term time when there are exceptional circumstances.

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities