

Children's Services
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Contact: Paul Brennan

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Dear parent/carer,

I would like to advise you about important changes to legislation announced by the Department for Education (DfE) with regard to holidays in term time.

From 1 September 2013, schools are no longer allowed to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time.

Requests for leave can only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and a holiday would not be considered exceptional. Requests for leave must also be made to the school in advance, as the DfE have told schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.

Parents may receive a penalty notice if their child is absent from school without permission. From September 2013 the cost of these notices will be £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

We appreciate the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays, particularly during the school holidays. **However, regular attendance at school is vital in helping children and young people to achieve their full potential and get the best possible start in life.**

Nationally, five million school days were missed in the academic year 2011/ 2012 because of family holidays in term time, which is 10.1 per cent of overall absence in schools. This high level of absence has led the government to make this important change to legislation.

We anticipate that all schools in Leeds will introduce firm policies, and we will work closely with them to ensure that this change to the law has a positive impact on rates of attendance in the city.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the council and your child's school to thank you for your full support in this matter.

Further information can be found at www.dfe.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brennan
Deputy director, learning skills and universal services