



Frequently Asked Questions: Holidays in term time in Wales

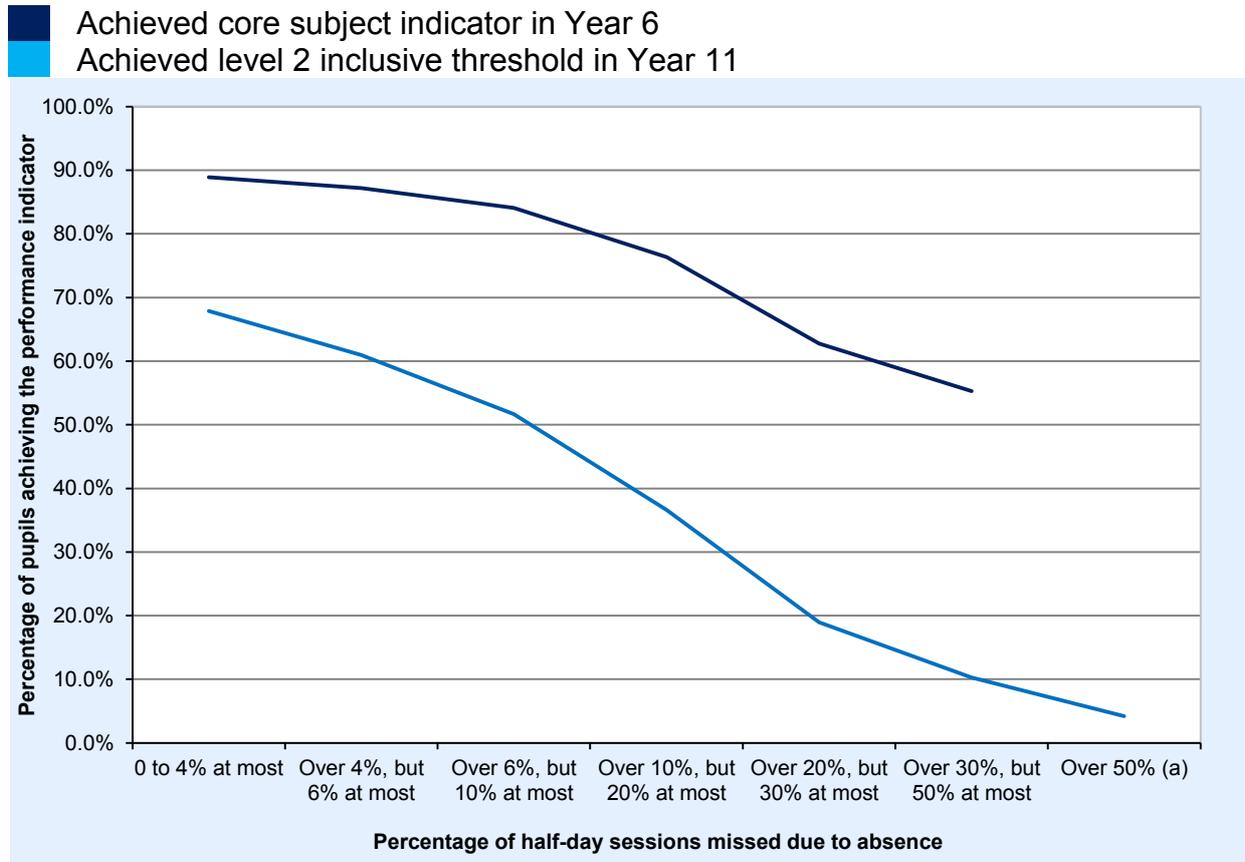
Information to parents and carers who are considering booking a holiday during term time

There are many experiences outside school that children can learn from that will enrich their lives. However, learners are only in school for a limited amount of time and we must ensure that we can make the most of this time for your child. If you do decide that you must book a holiday during term-time, please take into consideration that if your child misses school he/she can fall behind with school work and do less well in exams.

Research suggests that there may be a link between a child's regular attendance at school and how well they perform in exams. The graph on the next page shows that in general, pupils with higher rates of absence are less likely to achieve five A*-C grades (including English or Welsh) at GCSE.

The dark blue line shows how many children were achieving the expected level in both Maths and Science, and either English or Welsh first language (Core Subject Indicator), at Year 6. The light blue line shows how many pupils aged 15 got five A*-C GCSEs including English or Welsh (Level 2 Inclusive). In both cases, the chart suggests that in general, pupils with higher absence rates achieve lower results.

Table 1 – Achievement of learners in Years 6 and 11, by overall absence rate, 2013



Below are frequently asked questions which will help to inform your decision and what could happen if you take your child out of school during term time for a holiday.

1: Does the school have the authority to allow term time absence for holidays?

A: **Yes.** However, parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and you must apply for permission in advance. Schools have a discretionary power to authorise up to 10 days absence during a school year for family holidays during term time if it is felt necessary.

2: Why is this decision made by the school?

A: Head teachers have access to all the necessary information to make an informed decision. A head teacher is able to consider individual circumstances on a case-by-case basis. A number of things will be taken into account, including the time of year, length of the holiday, the reason

for the holiday, impact on learning, timing of exams or tests, family circumstances and the wishes of parents, as well as the overall attendance and attainment of the child.

3: What happens if the head teacher refuses to give permission?

A: If a head teacher decides to refuse a parent's request for a holiday in term time, and the parent takes the child on holiday anyway, it would be marked as an 'unauthorised absence'. Only schools, not parents, can authorise absence.

4: If the absence is unauthorised, will I be automatically issued a penalty notice?

A: No, it would depend on the pupil's previous absence record. Penalty notices are issued for failing to regularly attend school: in other words, regular unauthorised absence. Each local authority will have details on issuing penalty notices which will be set out in their individual Codes of Conduct. Please take the time to read the code before you make a decision. Please contact your local authority for further information.

5: What happens if people have booked a holiday for next year before the penalty notice legislation came into force?

A: It is at the discretion of the head teacher to deal with these matters on a case-by-case basis.