



# Holidays in Term Time Policy

St. John's Catholic Comprehensive School



*Excellence for All  
Service to Others  
Inspired by Christ*

*Policy adopted by the Full Governing Body  
Owner: Mr. J. Steadman  
Quality Assured: Mr. M. Barron*

*Date: April 2025  
Next Review Date: April 2028*

## **This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Attendance Policy**

It is a legal requirement for children to attend school. St John's places great importance on attendance. High attendance has a positive correlation with high achievement – pupils who have the highest attendance levels often have the highest attainment levels. At St John's we want every child to fulfil their potential.

From 1 September 2013 legislation prohibited any school from authorising leave of absence for holidays except in exceptional circumstances. Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

**It is therefore illegal to take children out of school for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to any leave of absence for a holiday during term time. Schools are in session for 39 weeks per year, so there are opportunities to take children on holiday during the remaining 13 weeks.**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on what might be defined as exceptional circumstances and the consequences of taking any unauthorised absence in term time as regards referral to the Local Authority and the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Fine.

Exceptional circumstances **MUST** be put in writing to the Headteacher. Examples of exceptional circumstances might include:

- Weddings or funerals of close family members.
- Consideration will be given to religious festivals – no more than 3 days in any one academic year.
- Where a holiday is recommended by qualified professionals as part of the rehabilitation of a parent's or pupil's medical issue – evidence must be supplied.

The consequences of taking an unauthorised holiday in term time to be considered are:

- The impact on the pupil's learning
- The adverse effect on the pupil's attainment levels
- Penalty Notices – see details below

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

From August 2024, the following penalty notice protocol applies:

- **First penalty notice:** £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- **Second penalty notice (within a 3-year period for the same child):** £160 with no early payment reduction.
- **Third penalty notice:** A third penalty notice cannot be issued within 3 years of the first penalty notice for the same child. Instead, alternative legal action will be taken, which may include prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice remains 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Any penalty notices issued will align with both DfE guidance and the local authority's code of conduct.