

## Term time holidays

### Introduction

School attendance of Leicestershire children in care is below that of their peers.

If a child is not in school they are not learning and are missing information they need to make progress; there will be gaps in their education. Research shows that every school day missed can affect a child's progress and attainment. It can also be difficult for a child to settle back into school after an extended period away. It is vital for you to do all you can to make sure the children in your care attend school.

### Holidays

It is the legal responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure a child attends school and they should only miss school if they are too ill to go in, or permission has been obtained in advance from the school head teacher for them to be off.

Holidays are important for enjoyment, bonding with foster family and emotional well-being, however, they should not be taken in term time. When planning a holiday, please check the school's term dates on their website well in advance. Don't assume all schools have the same holiday pattern.

If there are **exceptional** circumstances where a child needs to be taken out of school:

- The child's social worker must be in agreement with the reasons for taking the child out of school and will seek the views of the pupil, birth family (if relevant), school head teacher, and IRO, and record them on an 'Application for Term-Time Holiday Leave' form.
- If leave is granted by school, it is up to the head teacher to decide how many days the child can be away.
- If approval has been given by the school head teacher, the social worker must send the application to the Virtual School Head (VSH), Social Care Service Manager (and the Assistant Director if the holiday is over two weeks) explaining the compelling reason why the child should miss school.
- The holiday should only be booked once approval has been given by all the above.

n.b. The carer's holiday allowance will only be paid on declaration of the proposed holiday dates and destination. If dates are in term time, approval has not been given, and carers still take children out of school for a holiday, the allowance will not be paid and carers could be returned to the Fostering Panel as a result of breaching the foster carer agreement.