

‘Achieving Excellence through Leadership’

GILES JUNIOR SCHOOL

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"Excellence in Leadership"

Headteacher: Miss. L. Whitby

Friday, 05 September 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Family Holidays During Term Time

I would like to take this opportunity to remind families of the school and national expectations around pupil attendance. Government guidance is clear that children must attend school regularly in order to achieve their full potential. While we recognise that family time is important, **family holidays during term time cannot be authorised**. This applies to all pupils, including those with additional needs or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). In this respect, all pupils are treated equally.

The Department for Education makes clear that **a holiday is not classed as an exceptional circumstance**. In fact, there is no published list of what "exceptional circumstances" means, as each case must be considered individually. To illustrate the rarity and seriousness of such cases, examples might include:

- A close family member being diagnosed as terminally ill, where a final holiday together would support the grief process.
- The sudden death of a close family member, requiring immediate travel abroad to attend a funeral or visit close relatives.

These examples are given purely to demonstrate the extreme nature of what may, in rare instances, be considered. They are not an exhaustive list and should not be seen as setting a precedent.

It is important to be clear that **having a child with SEND is not considered an exceptional reason to take a holiday during term time**. All pupils, regardless of their needs, are subject to the same expectations regarding attendance.

We do hope that parents of children with additional needs are reassured that Giles Junior School goes above and beyond to create an environment which is safe, nurturing, and makes every reasonable adjustment necessary to support each child in school. However, **granting leave during term time is not an adjustment that a school can make**, as it is not permitted within the national framework.

Any requests for holidays in term time will therefore be unauthorised and may result in a fixed penalty notice issued by Hertfordshire County Council.

Supporting Your Child

Our priority is to support your child's learning and wellbeing by ensuring their consistent attendance at school. We ask for your cooperation in arranging family holidays outside of term dates, which are published well in advance on our school website. Thank you for working with us to give every child the best possible chance of success at Giles Junior School.

Kind Regards,

Miss Louise Whitby
Headteacher

