



## Term Dates & Term Time Holidays

### FAQ's – Frequently asked questions

**1. I have noticed that QES term dates are sometimes different to other schools. Why is this?**

This situation is not specific to QES. Several years ago the government deregulated term dates, so for some time now all schools set their own dates, which are then published on their school websites over a year in advance. Here at QES, we endeavour to liaise with other local secondary schools, as well as our feeder primary schools when setting our term dates but, as you will be aware, QES is surrounded by schools in three different counties and has about 50 different feeder primary schools, all of which have their own term dates so it is impossible to synchronise dates with every one of them. We spend a lot of time considering the dates and what is best for our students, their parents and their life chances and do our best to accommodate everyone, but there will inevitably be occasional differences now that there are no longer any nationally set school holiday dates.

**2. I am planning a family holiday, what should I do first?**

We always recommend that you check term dates on our school website before booking a holiday. If you have children in other schools, we strongly advise you check term dates on their school website too, as they may not necessarily be the same, and try to work around those dates in order to avoid unauthorised term time absence.

**3. I am considering taking my child out of school for a holiday in term time: what should I do?**

You will need to apply for leave of absence by completing the QES holiday absence request form, available on the school website, and returning to Mrs Gray, Assistant Headteacher, for consideration and authorisation **BEFORE** confirming your holiday arrangements.

**4. Will my holiday be authorised by school?**

Since 2013, parents have no legal entitlement to take their child out of school during term time and can be fined by the LA for doing so. Schools are only able, therefore, to authorise absence in the 'exceptional circumstances' listed by the government (see below). A family holiday is not considered an exceptional circumstance so our hands are very much tied. However, if there are exceptional reasons for the holiday, school can authorise up to 10 days holiday in any one year, provided the child's attendance is otherwise excellent and that the QES holiday form has been completed at least 2 weeks prior to the event.



Exceptional circumstances include:

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family (one day only).

In addition to the above, QES will also consider exceptional pastoral reasons that require time out of school, so do talk to us about your plans.

## **5. Aren't school visits just term time holidays?**

No. School visits that take place during school time have to include specific learning opportunities that extend and directly support your son or daughter's education. Due to this, they can be logged as 'educated offsite' and therefore count as present on the school register.

## **6. I cannot go on holiday at any other time due to work commitments / cost**

In the past, given we are a rural school with a large farming community and many self-employed parents, we have been able to be more flexible about this. However, we are now advised by the government that we can no longer accept parents' working rotas and holiday costs as valid reasons.

## **7. What happens if I take an unauthorised holiday?**

If the holiday is unauthorised, any absence taken will be logged as an 'O' (truancy) in school. Significant truancy obviously runs the risk of incurring a fine from the LA.

## **8. I have another question!**

If you have any further questions, queries or anxieties, please do contact Mrs Gray or your child's Head of Year to discuss further. We do understand that every case is different and try, within the guidelines, to be as flexible as possible.