

# Is It OK to Miss School for Vacation?



Students in Elmhurst, Illinois, might think twice about starting their Thanksgiving break early. For the past few years, a school district in Elmhurst has cracked down on students missing school because of family vacations. Those absences are marked as “unexcused” unless parents notify the principal at least two weeks in advance. Plus, teachers won’t give those students their missed assignments until after they return to class. The goal of the policy is to discourage families from scheduling vacations while class is in session.

“Family time is really important, but your education is your future,” says Jane Bailey, the principal at Fischer Elementary School in Elmhurst. “We can’t make up the learning experience in a classroom. It’s lost learning.”

School administrators nationwide say kids should miss school only when necessary, like when they’re sick. Research shows that attendance is closely linked to a student’s success. For example, one study from 2013 found that students who were absent three or more times in the month before a standardized test got lower scores than other students.

But others say it’s OK for kids to occasionally miss school to go on vacation. They argue that some families can’t afford to travel during school breaks, when flights and hotels are more expensive. Many parents also have busy work schedules and can take vacation only at certain times of the year.

Here’s what two of our readers think.

**Yes!** Kids can learn outside the classroom too.

Kids should be allowed to take time off from school for vacation every once in a while. After all, the classroom isn’t the only place where you can learn new things. Traveling to different places and seeing the sights can also be an important learning experience.

For example, I recently took time off from school to visit Washington, D.C., with my family. I got to see historic sites and went to the Smithsonian museums. I learned a lot on that trip.

As long as kids don’t skip school too often, being absent for a few days isn’t a big deal. They can make up the work they missed when they get back.

*Peter Coffey-Slattery, Maine*



**No!** Going to school is more important than any trip.

I like taking vacations with my family, but getting an education is more important. It takes kids a long time to get used to classroom routines. If they miss days for vacation, it can be hard for them to readjust to the school schedule when they return.

Plus, some kids might not be able to catch up on the work they missed while they were away. If one kid falls behind, the rest of the class can get disrupted when the teacher has to review material he or she has already taught.

Besides, schools build vacation time into the calendar—most students even get the whole summer off! Families should plan trips during those times.

*Sophia Bebawi, Texas*



**What’s Your OPINION?** Go online to cast your vote and download an opinion-writing skills sheet: [www.scholastic.com/sn56](http://www.scholastic.com/sn56)

POSTAL INFORMATION: SCHOLASTIC NEWS Edition 5/6 (ISSN 1554-2440) is published weekly during the school year except holidays and mid-term, 22 issues, by Scholastic Inc., 2931 East McCarty St., P.O. Box 3710, Jefferson City, MO 65102-3710. Periodical postage paid at Jefferson City, MO 65102 and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTERS: Send notice of address changes to SCHOLASTIC NEWS Edition 5/6, 2931 East McCarty St., P.O. Box 3710, Jefferson City, MO 65102-3710. Copyright ©2017 by Scholastic Inc. Scholastic News and associated designs are trademarks/registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc. All Rights Reserved. Materials in this issue may not be reproduced in whole or in part in any form or format without special permission from the publisher. Printed in the USA.

