



# Attendance

<b>Adopted On:</b>	Sept 2024
<b>Review Date:</b>	Sept 2027
<b>Review Frequency:</b>	Every 3 Years
<b>Approved By:</b>	Headteacher

Our Attendance Policy should be read in conjunction with our current School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school staff, alongside the LA, firmly believes that all children benefit from regular school attendance. We know that every day lost to education can have a serious impact on children's attainment and overall progress in school. As a staff we do all we can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the children in our care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Our Designated Attendance Officers are Victoria Abbott (Headteacher)/Gilly Forbes Wood (SENDCo/HSLW)

**Aim:**

- To encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance in order to benefit fully from the education provided
- To ensure any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly

**Expectations**

**We expect that all children will:**

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school ready to learn

**We expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:**

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and are collected on time
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school
- not to take holidays in term time

**To encourage attendance we expect that school staff will:**

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all children, twice daily
- monitor every child's attendance
- contact parents as soon as possible when a child fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences
- encourage good attendance and punctuality
- provide a caring and welcoming atmosphere for children in a safe learning environment
- meet with the school's attendance advice officer regularly to discuss any new concerns and report on the progress of existing cases;
- respond promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other children
- meet with the parents of children whose attendance causes concern;
- refer children whose attendance is an on-going concern, despite their best efforts to

resolve the situation, to the attendance advice officer for additional ongoing support and guidance

- work with the Surrey Attendance Service (SAS) and follow his/her advice once cases are referred to ensure that the legal process to address attendance concerns can be implemented if necessary

### **Understanding Types of Absence**

The following would be class as authorised absences:

This is for those children who are away from school for a reason that is deemed valid under the Education Act 1996.



Valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child’s parent(s) belong(s).
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending an educational provision
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the child not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed
- exceptional circumstances / emergencies

The following are types of absences that will be unauthorised:

- holidays / day trips
- absences which have not been properly explained
- looking after other children
- birthdays
- truancy before or during the school day
- keeping children off school unnecessarily
- reluctance / refusal to attend school
- parental illness/appointments
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child’s/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family get-together/day out
- Children accompanying their parents in the course of their work

This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If a child is reluctant or refuses to attend school, we will work with the family to understand the root cause. We have a number of strategies available to help reluctant children including working with our Home-School Link Worker (HSLW), School Nurse and other outside agencies. The child needs to attend school even if they are reluctant or refuses, and we would expect parents to encourage and reassure their child. By them attending school we are able to work

with them to overcome their anxiety. School will authorise long term absence relating to mental health if a doctor's note has been provided

### **Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance**

In all cases of a child experiencing complexities which result in some challenges to school attendance, the school will seek to work with the child and their families to support regular attendance. In some cases part-time timetables are used to support success with attendance. A part-time timetable should:-

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the child normally lives with
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the child's wider support, health care or reintegration plan
- Have regular review dates which include the child and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the child , after which the child is expected to attend full-time either at school or at an alternative provision If the arrangement means that the pupil arrives after the register closes in the morning and/ or be absent for the afternoon registration period, the code used should be C2 (leave of absence authorised by the school)

### **Dental and Medical Treatment**

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book dental and medical appointments outside the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified via a medical form. Evidence of the appointment may be requested. Parents are asked to remove the child only for the duration of the appointment.

### **Wellbeing and mental health**

As a school we are mindful that school absences occur for several reasons and some children are absent due to wellbeing/mental health issues including external medical appointments to meet these needs. Parents/Carers are asked to discuss their child's needs with the Headteacher.

### **Leave of absence**

Attendance at school is one of the most important factors in educational success. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and parents/carers are expected to book their family holidays during those times. Leave of absence will not be granted for holiday to be taken in term time. If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school on each and every day of absence by 9.00am either in person or by telephone. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure.

If a child has to leave the school premises in the school day for any reason they must have permission from the school. Parents must come to the office to sign their child. If they return back to school on that day they must be signed back in upon their return.

In exceptional circumstances when leave in term time is unavoidable, a leave of absence request form must be completed as soon as possible once the dates of the proposed period of absence are known. The request form can be obtained from the school office. In the event that parental responsibility is shared both parents/carers will be informed. No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for their child as a right. If leave is taken, without prior authorisation, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. Examples of exceptional circumstances, quoted by the Department for Education (DfE), are: service personnel and family crisis. Family holidays taken during term time due to affordability or work restrictions do not meet the DfE criteria for authorisation. The Headteacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence having decided whether or not the circumstances are exceptional.

Parents/carers who take their children out of school without authority for 5 or more days (which do not have to be consecutive), they will be liable to receive a penalty notice. Please note that penalty notices are issued per parent/carer per child so a family of two parents and two children will receive 4 penalty notices.

Surrey County Council is not responsible for authorising child absence and therefore cannot withdraw any Penalty Notice requests without the written permission of the Headteacher.

Should absence be taken without the Headteacher's authorisation, parents may be issued with a penalty notice as a result, see below.

### **Penalty Notices**

The Surrey Attendance Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider a prosecution for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

In the instance of a second absence (within three years of first Penalty Notice issue date) then a fine of £160 will be issued if paid within 28 days of receipt of notice. If the Penalty notice is not paid within 28 days then the Local authority must consider a prosecution. A third absence (within three years of first Penalty Notice issue date) will result in the Local Authority considering prosecution for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

### **Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued**

- Children identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- **The Education (Child Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions (5 days) or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a child has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

### **Penalty Notices relating to Exclusions**

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

### **The Surrey Attendance Advice Officer**

The Surrey Attendance Service monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis. The Surrey Attendance Advice Officer will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by school then the school will make a referral to the Surrey Attendance Service. The Surrey Attendance Advice Officer will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed, but unauthorised absence persists, the Surrey Attendance Advice Officer can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2,500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

### **Responding To Non-Attendance**

When a child does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9am the school will endeavour to contact them that day
- if there is no response to the phone call or the absence remains unexplained or still a concern, the office will inform the Headteacher and further investigation and action will be made accordingly in line with the Education Regulations 2006 (Child Registration), all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority
- if there is persistent non-attendance, the school office will keep records of the contact with home during the period of absence and this will be discussed with the attendance advice officer when a formal referral may be made
- if a child has persistent absence or has been identified on truancy patrols and meets the criteria for a Penalty Notice to be issued; or has been taken out of school without the school's permission for 5 or more days; the school will liaise with the attendance advice officer/ LA to decide whether a Penalty Notice should be issued

- failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Service may result in further action, an application for an Educational Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

### **At risk of becoming Persistent Absence (PA)**

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Any absence has an impact on a child's educational achievement and we need parents/carers full support and co-operation to tackle this. The Department for Education and the Local Authority monitor levels of PA children and levels of absence in all schools. Parents will be informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance when it is a cause for concern.

### **At risk of becoming Severely Absence**

A child becomes 'severely absent' when they have missed more than 50% of school sessions. Absence at this level will be significantly damaging the child's education. We will work with the parents / carers to resolve this. Any family whose child is at or near the persistent absence mark will offered support through the HSLW, School Nurse or South West Inclusion Service.

### **Responding to lateness**

Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount, therefore, that all children arrive at school on time.

We encourage parents to ensure their children arrive on time for school in order to access class early bird activities. The school doors open at 8:45am and the register is taken at 8:50am. If children arrive at school after the close of the register, they should be brought to the main office so they can be recorded as being present. Children will be recorded as being late (L) if they arrive after 8:50am but before 9.20am, when the registers close. Any child arriving after 9.20am, without a valid explanation, will be recorded as late after close of register and this denotes an unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness will be monitored and letters sent to parents to inform them of learning time lost. If lateness remains a problem and this lateness is after close of register a referral may be made to the Surrey Attendance Service.

Children should be collected at 3:20pm. If children are not collected by 3:20pm they will be taken to the office and parents telephoned. Parents/Carers will be asked to sign their child out in the late collection book.

### **Changing schools**

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform the school as soon as possible. A child will not be removed from our school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the child will be leaving our school and starting the next
- the address of the new school
- the new home address, if it is known

The child's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Surrey Attendance Service.

### **Elective Home Education**

If a parent/guardian elects for their child to be home educated then it is recommended that the parent advises the local authority and the school of their intention to home educate their child, they must provide you with written notice of intention to home educate (notification given in-person or over the telephone cannot be accepted) and the date from when it will start . It is, advisable for parents to discuss their plans to home educate their child or children with the school attendance leads before officially giving notice to home educate. The parents' EHE notification letter or email, which can be submitted by parents to the school via email or by hand, should include a statement advising of their intention home educate/home school/home tutor **and** from which date.



Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the Local Authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practically be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays