



Attendance Policy

Date adopted	December 2016	Owner	Attendance Officer
Last reviewed	April 2023	Review cycle	Annual

Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum attendance and that any problems preventing full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Parents/carers whose children are of compulsory school age (5 to 16) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a Penalty Notice.

In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments (2010, 2011, 2013, 2016) all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority. Schools are therefore required to report all absence figures to the Local Authority and the DfE and to ensure that they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

Expectations

Every member of staff makes attendance a high priority and convey this to pupils at all times. Parents/carers should also support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.
- Discuss with their class teacher any problems preventing them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers who have day-to-day responsibility for the child will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school promptly whenever the child is unable to attend school on the first day of absence and call in on a daily basis to update the schools of their child's condition, unless otherwise agreed with the school office.
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

We expect that school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils at least twice daily; at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions.
- Monitor every pupil's attendance and share attendance statistics where appropriate.
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Record all reasons for absence and lateness.
- Encourage and reward good attendance in line with whole school attendance targets.
- Make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the schools' and Local Authority's expectations with regard to regular school attendance.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service, via the Inclusion Officer with whom we monitor and evaluate individual and whole school attendance data.

- Be alert to early signs of disaffection that may lead to non-attendance and report these concerns to the Attendance Officer as soon as possible.
- Consider Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSNA) as a reason for low attendance and use EBSNA procedure to support improved attendance.
- Follow up any unexplained non-attendance or lateness with the schools' Attendance Officer informing them of any concerns.

Requests for Leave of Absence

Attendance and academic success are closely linked and it is very important that your child attends school every day. The schools do not authorise holidays during term time. Authorisation will only be given for absence, other than illness and medical appointments in exceptional circumstances, for example compassionate reasons. If a family feels leave in term time is unavoidable, a Leave of Absence Request Form (which can be obtained from the school office or school website) must be completed at least two weeks prior to the leave date. No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term time for their child as a right, and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively.

Dental and Medical Treatments

Whilst the school will grant requests for absences for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book these appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

Encouraging Attendance

Every pupil is set a target of 97% attendance. We encourage regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment.
- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the schools or other pupils.
- By accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registers.
- By celebrating good attendance.

Our Attendance Officer will monitor pupils with the Inclusion Service and inform parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Inclusion Service if the irregular attendance continues.

Lateness

The school day begins at 8.55am. The registers are open between 8:55 am and 9:05 am. If pupils arrive at the schools after the close of the register without a valid explanation, a late mark will be recorded in the class register. If a child arrives after 9.20am without a valid explanation, it will be counted as an unauthorised absence for that session. In cases of persistent late arrival to school, the Attendance Officer will initially write to parents who will subsequently be invited to a meeting in school where there is no improvement.

Responding to Non-Attendance

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

- On the first day of absence, if no communication is received from the parent/carer by 9.30am, the school will endeavour to contact them promptly.
- If there is no response, the schools will continue to try to contact the parent/carer.
- The Attendance Officer will respond to the persistent low attendance of individual children with a letter to the parents/carers detailing their attendance level, the impacts of low attendance and expectations moving forward.
- If there is no improvement in attendance, the class teacher or a member of the Leadership Team will meet with the parents/carers. At this meeting the reasons and impacts of low attendance will be discussed, an attendance form completed and parents/carers will be informed that if the absence persists, a referral will be made to the Inclusion Service.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Service may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and we need parent's support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. Parents will be notified if their child becomes a persistent absentee and will be invited to a meeting where an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified.

Penalty Notices

The Education (Pupil 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 Inclusion 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 £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the schools or Inclusion Officer.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is important that you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance. If you have any questions or require any further support to achieve an improvement, please contact the school or the Inclusion Officer at Surrey County Council's North East Inclusion Team on 01372 833588

Parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Changing Schools

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

- The dates the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next.
- The address of the new school.
- The new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent onto the new school as soon as possible. The schools will notify the local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name. In the event that the schools have not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service.



Record of Low Attendance Meeting

Name of Child	Class/ Year group	Date
People in attendance Parent/carers Class Teacher/Member of Leadership Team (circle)		Current Attendance (school target 97%)

Summary of discussion

Reasons for low attendance

-
-
-
-
-

Impact of low attendance

How can school support improved attendance?

Should school explore EBSNA? Y/N

If yes, name the lead (usually CT)

How can parent/carers support improved attendance?

How can pupil improve their own attendance?

Signed (parent/carers)_____

Signed (child if appropriate)_____

Signed (staff)_____