

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Summer 2022



Review Summer 2023

For distribution to: All school staff, governors, parents/carers, pupils and the area education welfare officer

All schools and Surrey County Council, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from 100% school attendance. Full attendance at school is crucial for a child's/student'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 their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher or delegated person in school.

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 whenever it is open. 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, all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority. In addition, schools are required to report all absence figures to the local authority and the Department for Education and to ensure they are recorded on a child's/student's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school 100% of the time
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss with their class teacher, school office or headteacher any problems preventing them from attending school.

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

- Ensure 100% school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities. (By law all children aged 5-16 must have an appropriate full time education. You are responsible for making sure this happens by registering your child at the school and ensuring they attend. Further information regarding your legal responsibilities can be found on the Surrey County Council website)
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and have completed any homework they have been given
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school

- Contact the school office by 9.30 am on the first day of a child absence, giving the reason for the absence.
- Discuss with the class/form teacher, house head or headteacher any problems preventing their child/children from attending school.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.

We expect that school staff will: -

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, as required by current legislation
- Monitor every pupil's attendance
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Encourage good attendance
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for children
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- Make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and the local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the attached Educational Welfare Officer
- Fulfil, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them

In order for this Attendance Policy to be successful, **every** member of staff in every school must make attendance a high priority and convey this to pupils at all times. Parents/carers should also need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

Illness

If a child is unfit for school parents should contact the school on the first day of absence by 9.30am either in person or by telephone and on all subsequent days. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure.

Pupil's leaving during the school day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school. Wherever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school should be notified of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Children should be taken out of school for the minimum amount of time. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.
- Parents are requested to advise the school, by completing the Absence Request Form, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time;
- Pupils must come to the office to be signed out on leaving the school and to be signed back in on their return;
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site;

- All pupils leaving with permission will be given a written authorisation slip by the school in case of being stopped by Truancy Patrol;
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the police and register the pupil as a missing person.

Punctuality and lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial and for registration at the beginning of the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. The school grounds are open at 8.40am and the doors open at 8.45.

- Registration takes place at 9.00am. Students who arrive after this time will be recorded as late to school and receive a late mark in the register;
- Registers close at 9.15am and after this time lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and a missed session and can be subject to penalty notices and prosecution by the local authority;
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be referred to the home school link worker and/or referred to the Inclusion Service and can be subject to penalty notices.
- Late arrival after the close of registration on 10 occasions during a half term where the pupil's attendance falls below 90% will be referred to Education Welfare and can be subject to penalty notices.

We appreciate that sometimes unavoidable circumstances can happen and that this would mean a child being late into school. If there are exceptional circumstances which mean your child is going to be frequently late then this should be discussed with the Headteacher. The school will monitor children's lateness and this will be looked at on an individual basis.

Changing schools

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

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate

The student's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority Tracking Officer and Inclusion Service.

SEARCH Group Attendance The law allows for the dual registration of pupils at more than one school. Surrey policy for children attending nurture groups expects dual registration in cases where the children do not register at their own schools.

Children attending SEARCH are generally collected from their own schools and transported to SEARCH and so should be registered at their own schools prior to them undertaking the journey and so dual registration is not necessary.

SEARCH group is based at Ash Grange School and so a register is taken and given to the Ash Grange office for health and safety/fire reasons.

If there is a child who is taken directly to SEARCH group by parents/carers and not registered first at his/her own school the child will be dual registered at both Ash Grange Primary School and his/her own school. Both schools will share responsibility for the child and failure to attend either school at the proper time without good reason will be unauthorised absence. The school where the child is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance. The school where the pupil is not expected to attend will record the child as D.

Requests for leave of absence during term time

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term-time for their child as a right and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively. Permission for absence during term time is at the Headteachers discretion and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an **Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances form** must be completed at least two weeks prior to the leave date. This form is available from the school office. The Headteacher, who may consult with the Chair of Governors and other local schools (in cases where siblings attend another local school), will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for each request.

Family holidays - The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and are available from the school office and on the individual school websites. Family holidays need to be booked within the school holiday dates. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 remove references to extended leave and holiday and make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Family holidays are not exceptional circumstances and so are deemed as "unauthorised leave of absence" and will trigger a penalty notice.

Family weddings or significant events – The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 require headteachers to determine the number of school days that a child can be away from school if leave is granted and this would be for a **maximum** of 3 days.

Traveller Absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller pupils, in common with all other pupils, is to attend school 100% of the time.

To protect Traveller parents/carers from prosecution for failing to ensure regular attendance, the Education Act 1996, section 444, sub-section 6, states that a Traveller parent/carer is safe from prosecution if their pupil accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days or 100 full days) in a year. A Traveller absence code can therefore be used if a Traveller child is absent when their parent/carer is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature that requires them to travel from place to place. When travelling a parent/carer has the right to enrol their child at another school in the area they are engaged in their trade. Schools will require evidence that Traveller parents are travelling for work.

Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, will 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 per parent per child, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 per parent per child, 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.

If prosecuted you could receive a community order, a fine of up to £2,500 per parent/carer or a custodial sentence.

School Attendance order

A parent who fails to ensure that their child receives an education other than at school and fails to register their child at a school will be served with an Attendance Order requiring them to register the child at a named school.

Failure to comply with an Attendance Order is an offence under Section 443 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued

1) Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1st September 2013 state that 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 absence is granted.

2) Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, **each parent** may be 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.

3) A Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 85% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parent's failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or the Educational Welfare 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 taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued. Parents will be reminded of this policy on a termly basis.

Walsh Memorial CE Infant School Times of Day

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| 8.45 -9.00am | School door opens |
| 9.00 am | Registration and doors shut |
| 9.01 am | Registers returned to office, arrival between 9.00-9.15 recorded as L for Late |
| 9.05 am | Lessons |
| 9.15 am | Registers closed arrival after this time recorded as U for registration closed/unauthorised absence |
| 10.30 am | Collective Worship |

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| 10.45 am | Playtime |
| 11.00 am | Lessons |
| 12.00 pm | Lunch time |
| 1.00 pm | Children return to classroom |
| 1.05 pm | Lessons |
| 3.00 pm | Home time |

Reporting Attendance

A certificate of attendance will be sent out with the school reports each term which will show the percentage attendance for each child as well as their actual marks for each day. This will give parents/carers an overall picture of the child's attendance throughout the school year.

Equal opportunities

All children's attendance and punctuality is monitored and procedures are followed regardless of race, culture, gender, ability or religion.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The school has an established culture that promotes and enhances the positive mental health of the whole school community, recognising that healthy relationships underpin positive mental health and have a significant impact on learning, health and wellbeing. We champion the expectation that 'mental health is the individual's responsibility supported by the whole school community.'