



Attendance Policy

Nominated Lead Member of Staff:

Mrs K Barnes / Senior Attendance Champion

Lead Governor:

Mr David Rose

Status & Review Cycle:

Statutory (Annual)

Next Review Date:

Summer 2025

Introduction

At Shottermill we will do all we can to encourage parents and guardians to ensure that the children in their care achieve the maximum possible school attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon. This Policy has been shared with the school's Surrey Attendance Advice Officer for approval as well as with Governors.

This Attendance Policy has been written in accordance with the latest DfE guidance: **Working together to improve school attendance Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities Published: 29th February 2024**. This document states that all maintained schools must have an Attendance Policy within their school, which should be made available to parents via the school website or in hard copies, if requested. This Policy also links to **The Equality Act 2010** and as a school the following equalities objectives have been published to show how we are committed to ensuring a fully inclusive working and learning environment for all:

- **Provide all children with appropriate access to learning experiences at our school and not disadvantage any child from taking part on the grounds of their gender, ethnicity, background or culture, Special Educational Need or Disability, or any other discriminatory factor.**
- **Provide a secure and supportive environment that empowers people to challenge discrimination should they encounter it.**
- **Ensure that any person visiting or working within our school environment does not suffer discrimination.**
- **Ensure prospective employees are treated fairly and do not suffer any form of discrimination in line with fair recruitment purposes.**
- **Promote and celebrate diversity of children and adults who visit or work within our school and promote equality through our actions and communications.**
- **Provide systems of monitoring to facilitate continuous improvement, learning and sharing of existing good practice, as overseen by the Governing Body and Local Authority.**
- **Work with all stakeholders or other local schools to develop cohesive communities with shared values that encompass equal opportunities.**
- **Work towards the elimination of discrimination and harassment through upholding our Core Values of: *Respect, Trust, Love of Learning, Communication, Creativity and Excellence.***

Expectations, Roles and Responsibilities

We aspire to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance. Our aim is to build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher (or other member of staff) any problems that deter them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons 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 child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- 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 and every subsequent day of absence;
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

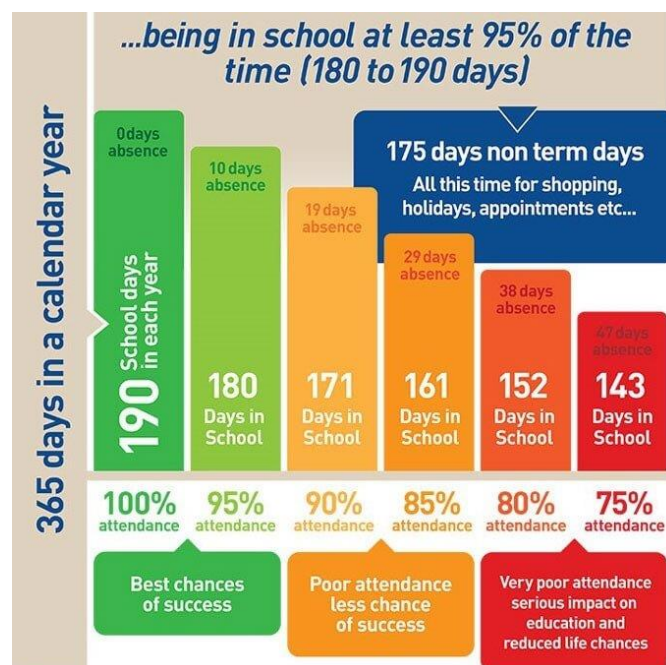
We expect that school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- Regularly monitor every pupil's attendance;
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain the reasons why a child has been absent;
- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LEA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- Use a range of strategies to encourage good attendance;
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and a safe and inclusive learning environment;
- Listen compassionately to any pupil's concerns as to why they are not attending school and work hard to address these concerns to improve attendance;
- Listen compassionately to any parent or carer's views and provide early help and advice;
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Surrey Attendance Service;
- Ensure that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

Definition of good school attendance:

Good attendance is considered to be at least 96%. We categorise children who regularly miss school as **either persistently absent** (where attendance is below 90%) or **severely absent** (where attendance is below 50%).

It is important that parents and carers understand that illness, holidays, unauthorised absence all count towards their child's overall % attendance. If a child's attendance at the start of the year is low, this can be improved, as the % attendance will rise the more days they attend school. Ultimately school attendance dramatically impacts on the development of a child:



'The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard'

DfE Statutory Guidance, Working together to improve school attendance 2024.

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 require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. 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 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 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.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school 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.
4. 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. 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.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

1. If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school, Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours.

This duty applies to the **first five days of each exclusion**. Failure to do so will render the parent/carer liable to a Penalty Notice. (Alternative education provision will be made available from the sixth day of any exclusion.)

Encouraging Attendance

Shottermill Junior School encourages 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 school or other pupils;
- By marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. If pupils arrive at school after the close of the register without a written explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and pupil's name recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill;
- By publishing and displaying attendance and punctuality information in newsletters and on the school website;
- By celebrating good and improved attendance;
- By monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Surrey Attendance Service if the irregular attendance continues.

Responding To Non-Attendance

The school gate opens at **8:35am** and closes at **8:55am**. Pupils should go straight to their class and be present for the register taken at **8:50am**. Pupils arriving after 9:00am will be marked late (L code) and must report to the School Office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for. Pupils who are late to school must be signed in by their responsible adult at the School Office. Any pupils who arrive after the close of the register at 9:20am will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U code).

Parents/carers should contact the school explaining every absence a child has, on the first day of absence, as soon as possible and no later than 9:00am. Parents should contact the school on every day of absence, until the child returns to school. Parents can contact the school by email, phone or via an online absence form on our school website: <https://www.shottermill-jun.surrey.sch.uk/form/?pid=29&form=16>

When we receive no contact the following procedures may be followed:

- Members of the School Office will follow up with an email or phone call
- Alternative contacts provided by the parent / carer will be phoned / emailed
- We may contact another school where a sibling attends to ascertain the reason for the absence
- DSLs may make a home visit to check on the child
- DSLs will contact either the Police, Children's Services or the Surrey Attendance Service where they believe a child's location is unclear and there is a safeguarding concern

If no message is received it is considered to be an "unauthorised absence" and the total of such absences have to be published by law. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child is repeatedly late or absent from school without authorisation, the parent could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice. Please contact the School Office or the Home School Link Worker: Katherine Bourne, if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Failure to attend school on a regular basis and on time will be considered a safeguarding issue

Changing Schools

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

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- The address of the new school;

- The new home address, if it is known;
- Confirmation from the new school that the child has started and been marked present.

The pupil'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.

If a parent exercises their right to home educate their child, we will require this in writing, with the date they wish their child to be removed from roll, before this can be accepted by the Headteacher. It is our expectation that parents will meet with the Headteacher to discuss their decision to electively home educate their child. Pupils who are withdrawn from school will be referred to the Surrey Attendance Service or Elective Home Education Team who will be in touch to arrange a home visit.

We will inform a child's new school were a penalty notice has been served previously.

Non-starters

In the event of the child not starting at the school, the child must be marked as absent and enquiries made with Surrey Admissions Team. If Admissions confirm that the child has started at another school, the child can be taken off roll. However, if there is no record of the child starting anywhere else, school must refer to the Surrey Attendance Service for a visit to be made and appropriate action can be taken to enforce attendance or establish what provision is being made available to the child.

School Organisation

In order for school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupil's at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education. In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

Headteacher / Senior Attendance Champion, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- Review and adopt the whole school policy;
- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that the appropriate resources are provided;
- Initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence;
- Ensure that key staff have timetabled periods for liaison and appropriate access to attendance management systems;
- Work in close collaboration with the Surrey Attendance Service during their termly register analysis;
- Institute an attendance award scheme with assemblies, certificates and rewards;
- Monitor attendance data for patterns and shared this information with Staff, Governors, local partners and the Surrey Attendance Service;
- Offer support to parents, guardians and children in order to resolve issues of non-attendance;
- Ensure that any concern relating to the welfare of a child is quickly dealt with and the relevant agencies informed.
- Follow all safeguarding policies and protocols to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded.

Class Teachers

- Complete registers regularly and punctually at least twice daily;
- Follow up any unexplained non-attendance with those staff responsible for monitoring this;
- Record all reasons for absences in the register;
- Inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance of any concerns, or the DSL if appropriate;
- Be alert to early signs of emotional based school non-attendance (EBSNA) which could affect good attendance;
- Work proactively and in partnership with parents and guardians or other agencies to ensure that attendance is improved for identified individuals;
- Follow all safeguarding policies and protocols to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded.

Home School Link Worker

- Assist with enquiries to determine why a child has not attended school;
- Impress upon parents and guardians the importance of good attendance and offer early help and support to help them;
- Liaise between the Headteacher, Class Teacher and parent / guardian to ensure that there is effective communication;
- Ensure that any concern relating to the welfare of a child is quickly dealt with and the relevant agencies informed;
- Follow all safeguarding policies and protocols to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded.

Steps the school may take to follow up on school non-attendance:

- Letters will be sent to the parent to alert them to an attendance concern or an informal discussion will be had;
- Parent will be invited to attend a meeting with the HSLW, DSL or Headteacher;
- Parent will be required to provide medical evidence to support further absences, so they can be authorised;
- Parent will be invited to come to an Attendance Meeting with the Headteacher;
- A 'Notice to Improve' may be served where we are concerned about a child's attendance;
- Parent will be referred to the Surrey Attendance Advice Officer and issued with a Penalty Notice if attendance remains a cause for concern;



Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to validate your request (confirmation of a medical appointment or proof of travel arrangements e.g. flight information)

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more will result in the following action being taken:

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision. In the absence of a decision, parents/carers cannot assume that permission for the absence has been given. For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Name of child:	Class:
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for	
from:	to:
Number of school days:	

The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:

Has your child/children already had any leave of absence since 01 September 2024 resulting in a penalty notice being issued to you (applicant) or any other parent/carer? YES / NO

If YES, please give dates and details:

I also have children at...

Signed: (Parent/Carer)

Date:

Address :

To be completed by the Headteacher

Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:

Approved

The absence will be recorded as authorised.

Not approved

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised and we will be requesting the Surrey County Council to issue a penalty notice per parent/carer per child.

Explanatory notes:

Signed:

(Headteacher)

Date: