



Pupil Attendance Policy

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Pupil Attendance Policy

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Introduction

- At Walton on the Hill Primary School, we expect children to attend school every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.
- Excellent attendance and punctuality is important if children are to benefit from everything school has to offer. Regular attendance at school is fundamental for children to be successful.
- School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life and research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance, punctuality and educational progress and attainment.
- Parents/carers and the school staff are partners in making this a success and this partnership is very important to the school. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.
- As parents/carers, it is your responsibility to ensure your child/children arrive at school and return home safely.

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- ensure that all children have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning
- improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality
- clearly set out the processes that are made available to parents to report absence
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- act early to address patterns of absence
- make parents and carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

Expectations

We expect that all children will:

- attend school every day as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their class teacher, or the school office, any problems that may affect their school attendance

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- ensure that they contact the school daily in the event of absence
- ensure they inform the school if absence is known in advance
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details
- engage with support from school to ensure their child's regular attendance at school

We expect that the school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere
- provide a safe learning environment
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's/carer's concerns
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality and monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality
- contact parents on the first day of absence when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow-up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the Headteacher can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of recognition
- regularly inform parents/carers of the % attendance of all children
- work collaboratively with children and their families to support children's regular and punctual attendance at school
- make initial enquiries regarding children who are not attending regularly
- meet regularly with the Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams
- notify the Local Authority after 15 days sickness
- notify the Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams after 10 days unexplained absence

We expect that the Governors will:

- monitor attendance against the annual target set by the Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams
- receive updates regarding attendance levels and any children whose attendance is causing concern, although not by name, from the Headteacher in a termly report.

Definitions

- Every day counts as two sessions.
- Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.
- Regular attendance means that a child must attend school every day, unless there are justified reasons, and arrive at school on time.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. The Headteacher authorises the absence.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable, or for which no reason has been given. The school will use the DfE guidance to support decision making.

Examples of Authorised Absences:	Examples of Unauthorised Absences:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • genuine illness of the pupil • hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil • major religious observances • visits to prospective new schools • external exams or educational assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park • a birthday treat • oversleeping due to a late night • looking after other children/other family member • appointments or illness of other family members • holidays

Each child's attendance can be broadly summarised as:

97%+	Well done! This will give your child a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic. Your child's attendance is at, or above, the school target.
96% - 95%	Strive to build on this. Your child's attendance is below the school target and will be monitored.
94% - 90%	Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. This is a cause for concern and will be closely monitored. The school and Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams may work with you to improve your child's attendance and/or punctuality. You will be sent a letter of concern from the school's Attendance Lead on attendance and you may also be asked to provide medical evidence for future absence.
Below 90%	This level of attendance is known as persistent absence and is unacceptable. Absence is affecting attainment and progress and disrupting your child's learning. Your child's attendance is now a major concern. A formal discussion with the Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams may take place.

The school and their Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams work closely together and regularly monitor both attendance and punctuality. Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

Rewards

- The main benefit from regular and punctual attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.
- As a school, we acknowledge improvements in attendance directly with families.

When to Report Absence to the School

All absences must be reported on a daily basis. In all cases of absence, the parents/carers should:

- only keep your child away from school if really necessary. The school will always call and send home an unwell child.
- telephone the school on **01737 812103** at the earliest opportunity to let them know why your child is going to be absent. Please try and phone by 9.15am at the very latest. The office has an answer machine and messages can be left there.
- call daily and keep the school informed if more than one day's absence is necessary.
- send a note to school explaining the reason for absence.
- if medical appointments are absolutely necessary during the school day, children are expected to return to school for the rest of the school day.

Our School uses a '1st day calling' system. If your child fails to register or is absent and we have not received notification by 9.15am, a call will be made to you. This only applies on the first day of absence. It is the parent's/carer's responsibility to call the school each day their child is off school and explain the reason why.

If a child is absent for five consecutive days or more, we may request medical evidence to confirm the reason for their absence. Examples of medical evidence include:

- evidence of a call with your GP at the time your child is unwell, to demonstrate that you have sought medical advice and opinion - such as a screenshot of a call log;
- evidence of an appointment with a GP or other medical professional, for your child - such as a screen shot of a text or email confirmation of an appointment time;
- evidence of the issuance of prescription medication - such as a photo of the prescription or the prescribed medication;
- evidence of the purchase of over-the-counter medicines from the pharmacy - such as a photo of a till receipt.

If a child is absent from school and no explanation is offered by the parents/carers, and the school office are not able to contact the parents/carers, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may refer the child's absence to the Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams. After ten days of unexplained absence, the school is required to refer the absence to the Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams.

If a child is absent from school and no explanation is offered by the parents/carers within two weeks of the absence, it will automatically be recorded as an unauthorised absence. If an appropriate reason is given by parents/carers within two weeks of the absence, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will decide if the absence is authorised in retrospect.

For further information about school procedures in the event of illness and injury during the school day, and the school policy for administering medicines, please see the 'What to do if your child is unwell' page on our school website – [please click here to see more](#).

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. 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. The playground is accessible from 8.40am and children need to remain with their parents until they enter the classroom from 8.45am. Registration takes place promptly at 8.55am. If your child arrives after this time, they must enter via the school office where they will be signed in.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every child.

- Registration takes place at 8.55am and children who arrive after this time will be recorded as late to school.
- Registers close at 9.20am and after this, lateness may be recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.15pm.
- Persistent lateness by a child may be dealt with through the Team Around the Child Champion and/or may be referred to the Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams.
- Children's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools.

Children Leaving During the School Day

During school hours, the school staff are legally *in loco parentis* and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission and agreement from parents/carers and the school.
- Whenever possible, parents/carers should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.
- Children must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a child is being collected from the school, parents/carers are to report to the school office before the child is allowed to leave the site.
- If a child leaves the school site without permission, their parents/carers 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 child as a missing person (Memorandum of Understanding between Schools in Surrey and Surrey Police in relation to Children Missing During the School Day – July 2018).*

The Law

By law, parents and carers must ensure that all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 18) receive a suitable, full-time education (Education Act, 1996). Surrey County Council employs Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams to monitor school attendance and to support both schools and parents/carers to ensure that every child attends school regularly. As a parent/carer, you may be committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice, prosecution or application for an Education Supervision Order.

Leave of Absence

- Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are those considered to be the rarest of incidences.
- Any absence must be requested as far in advance as possible, and no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. A form (*Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time*) will need to be collected from the office or downloaded from the school's website and completed.
- The guidance from Surrey County Council is that if a parent/carer takes their child out of school e.g. on holiday or other unauthorised leave of absence, for 5 days (10 sessions) or more, without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent/carer will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice for each child who is absent.
- If leave is taken without authorisation by the school, it may be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams may be notified. A Penalty Notice will be issued.

Penalty Notices

The Schools Attendance and Advice 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 Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. 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 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 Headteacher, 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 the Local Authority considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If a parent/carer has incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the 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 The Local Authority considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If a parent/carer has incurred 2 penalty notices relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the parent/carer will NOT receive a third penalty notice – The Local Authority will have no option but to consider a prosecution against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

Changing Schools

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

- 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

The pupil's school records will 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 Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams.

If a pupil moves out of the area and they are no longer feasibly able to attend this school, but do not yet have a place confirmed at a new school in their local area, the family will be referred to the Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams so that the matter may be passed on to the Children Missing Education Team within the new Local Authority.

Children on modified timetables or who are accessing alternative provision

In collaboration with all relevant agencies, Walton on the Hill Primary School will work to ensure and monitor the regular attendance of those children who are attending school on a modified timetable, or who are accessing alternative provision off-site for all or part of the school week. The school is required to report this attendance information to the Local Authority School Attendance Support Teams half-termly, as part of data collection for Pupils Missing Out On Education (PMOOE).

Attendance Intervention and Support Strategy

Our attendance target for 2025–2026 is **to improve in year school attendance by at least 2%**. We recognise that attendance is everyone’s responsibility – pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors – and that early, supportive intervention is key to preventing persistent absence.

Attendance is monitored daily by the school Admin Team and Attendance Lead and reviewed weekly by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) during the SLT meeting. Pupils whose attendance begins to cause concern will be identified quickly and supported in line with our *Tiered Attendance Intervention Strategy* detailed below.

Tiered Attendance Intervention Strategy:

Tier	Attendance Band / Trigger	Action and Support	Led by
Tier 1 – Early Warning	Attendance between 94–95% or emerging pattern of concern (e.g., repeated one-day absences, lateness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Lead to share data and names of pupils within this band with relevant Class Teachers • Class Teacher to have an initial meeting with parents/carers to raise awareness, discuss reasons for absence and offer support. • Short-term monitoring over the next 4–6 weeks. 	Class Teacher with oversight from Attendance Lead
Tier 2 – Targeted Support	Attendance between 91–93% , or continued concern following Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal ‘Attendance Concern’ letter (Tier 2 version) sent to parents/carers by Attendance Lead requesting to meet to discuss absence. • Support offered (e.g. pastoral check-ins, transport solutions, mentoring). • Collaborative setting of simple, achievable attendance targets. • Attendance monitored weekly and reviewed after 4–6 weeks. 	Attendance Lead
Tier 3 – Risk of Persistent Absence	Attendance at or below 90% (DfE definition of Persistent Absence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Formal ‘Attendance Concern’ letter (Tier 3 version) sent to parents/carers by Headteacher requesting to meet to discuss absence. • Meeting held with both Headteacher and Attendance Lead. • Identify and address barriers (health, SEND, anxiety, family issues, etc.). • Attendance Contract/Agreement drawn up with measurable targets. • Engage external agencies where appropriate (e.g., Early Help, Family Support, Education Welfare Officer). • Weekly monitoring and contact with parents/carers. 	Attendance Lead and Headteacher

Tier	Attendance Band / Trigger	Action and Support	Led by
Tier 4 – Formal / Statutory Action	Attendance remains below 90% despite intervention or drops significantly lower (e.g., ≤85%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral made to the Local Authority Inclusion/Attendance Team in line with Surrey County Council’s Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices. • Possible escalation to legal intervention (Penalty Notice or Parenting Contract) if absences are unauthorised. • Continued multi-agency involvement (Early Help, CAMHS, Social Care) as appropriate. • Ongoing support plan or reintegration programme developed where needed. 	Headteacher in consultation with Local Authority

The school will communicate regularly and clearly with parents about attendance expectations and the impact of lost learning time. Attendance reports will be shared with parents at least termly and discussed at parent consultations.

The Attendance Lead will produce half-termly attendance reports for the Headteacher and Governing Body, highlighting pupils in each tier and the impact of interventions. Data will be analysed by cohort (e.g. year group, SEND, Pupil Premium) to identify patterns and inform strategy.

Application for Leave of Absence

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, children 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.

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 The Local Authority 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, then the 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 The Local Authority considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 or more penalty notices relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, then you will **NOT** receive a third penalty notice – The Local Authority will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

Please complete and submit the form overleaf if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for evidence to support your request.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for your request and will notify you of their decision as soon as possible.

For further information about requests for a Leave of Absence, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Application for Leave of Absence Form

To be completed by the parent/carer

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 already had leave of absence in this school year? YES / NO	
If YES, please give dates and details:	
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.
Explanatory notes:	
N.B. Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.	
Signed:	Senior Leader:
	Date: