



Furzeffield Primary School

Be kind, be respectful, be resilient. Aspiration and opportunity for all.

Attendance Policy

NON- STATUTORY

Owner	Pastoral Lead and Home School Link Worker
Committee	N/A
Date of Last Review	Autumn 2024
Next Review Date	Autumn 2025

Introduction

This policy has been developed for Furzefield Primary School in partnership with staff, parents, pupils, governors and Surrey Inclusion Service to encourage good attendance for all pupils.

This policy sets out the rationale, aims and strategies that will be used to ensure all pupils achieve maximum attendance. 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 their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems which prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. It is hoped pupils will achieve 100% attendance but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

Parental responsibility and the law

Parents/carers whose children are of compulsory school age and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

Furzefield Primary School has a Home-School Agreement with parents and carers. This agreement outlines how the school, and parents/carers work in partnership for the benefit of children. Supporting good attendance is a part of the agreement and parents are expected to ensure their child or children attend/s school regularly.

Parents/carers role is to:

- Ensure children go to school regularly, arrive and are collected on time and do not miss school for unacceptable reasons.
- Help children to understand the importance of going to school and make it clear absences from school for no good reason will not be supported.
- Praise children for good or improved attendance.
- Ensure the school is aware of any issues or problems which are affecting attendance and work with the school to resolve these.
- To inform the school on the first day of absence by 9am **and** continue to inform the school each day they are absent.
- Make every effort to ensure all medical appointments are made outside school time. The school must be informed of any medical appointments made in school time.(Written evidence may be requested.)
- Assist children at home in catching up on missed work.
- Take family holidays during school holidays - *there is no entitlement for a parent to take children away during term time.*

All staff are to:

Actively encourage good attendance and punctuality. Discuss with parent's reasons for absence or lateness and notify our Home School Link Worker / Pastoral Lead of any attendance concerns.

Governing Body and Head Teacher roles are to:

Promote the attendance policy and ensure it is implemented effectively. Ensure the school provides a system to reward good and improved attendance and punctuality.

Registers

Under the provision of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the school must keep an admission register and an attendance register.

Registration and Lateness

It is expected that children will arrive at school on time. The school day begins at 8.35am when the attendance register will be taken. If pupils arrive at school after the register has been taken, a late mark will be recorded. The register will close at 8:45am. If a child arrives after 9.15am without a valid explanation e.g. Doctors appointment, it will be recorded as 'late after close of register' and counted as an unauthorised absence for the morning session. The pupil's name and the time of arrival will be recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill. There is also a register in the afternoon and children who are absent in the morning are still able to come in if they are feeling well enough to attend the afternoon session, this register is taken in class at 1pm.

Responding to Non-Attendance

Initial actions

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school as soon as possible the morning their child is absent and provide a reason.

If we do not hear from the parent/carer the school will endeavour to contact them on the same day.

If there is no response the school will try to contact the parent/carer on every subsequent day of absence. If after 3 school days of consecutive absence (with no communication between school and parent/carer) an unannounced home visit will be undertaken to establish the wellbeing of the child.

On the child's return to school if no appropriate reason has been given for the absence, the absence will be unauthorised. This may lead to contact being made to Surrey Inclusion Services and a fixed penalty notice being issued.

Authorised / Unauthorised Absence

If a child is too unwell to attend school, their absence will be authorised. This may be supported by medical evidence following a doctor's appointment. However, in some cases, a child's illness may lead to a longer period away from school. EG: sickness / diarrhoea = 48 hours absence following the last episode. We will seek guidance from Public Health England and The Public Health Security Agency in order to advise families appropriately.

Families must complete and submit an 'application for leave of absence' form to the school office for any planned time away from school during term time.

No in-term holidays will be authorised.

In exceptional circumstances, a child's absence from school may be authorised by the Head Teacher following consideration and discussion with the family.

Frequent Absence

Whilst a child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they may be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are to be resolved between the school, the parents/carer and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is important to communicate any worries or concerns with school staff. This may be the class teacher, Home-School Link Worker, ELSA or Pastoral Lead. As a team, we will endeavour to support the child and work together with parents/carers to improve school attendance.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absence, the school will make every effort to work with the family to improve attendance. This may include the following actions:

- Regular supportive communication.
- In-school adjustments. EG: soft-start, meet and greet, discussions with the child to understand any worries.
- Meetings at school with the Home School Link Worker, a member of the Pastoral Team and other professionals if required. *A member of staff from Surrey Inclusion Services may be invited to attend a panel meeting.*

The LA Inclusion Officer meets with the Pastoral team including the Home School Link Worker on a regular basis to discuss attendance concerns. The LA Inclusion Officer will decide if the matter should be taken further.

Persistent Absence (PA)

The Department for Education defines a pupil as 'persistently absent' if 10% or more of possible sessions are missed, and severely absent if 50% or more of possible sessions are missed. 10% of sessions translates to around 7 days of absence across the term.

Any absence has an impact on a child's educational achievement and the school needs parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The Department for Education and the Local Authority monitor the levels of persistently absent children, and levels of absence in all schools.

Attendance of all pupils is tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this information with academic mentoring and achievement as evidence shows that poor school attendance affects academic attainment.

Parents will be informed termly of their child's attendance.

Emotional-Based School Non-Attendance (EBNSA)

EBSNA is a term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences. In these cases, our Home School Link Worker, ELSA and Pastoral Lead will support the child using a holistic-whole family approach.

Strategies may include:

- ✓ Offer of a home visit and conversation to understand any contributing factors and barriers that the family may be experiencing related to school attendance.
- ✓ Work closely with parents/carers to maintain a positive relationship and work collaboratively to support the child.
- ✓ EBSNA Support Plan meeting with staff, child and parent.
- ✓ 'Mapping the landscape of fear' activity run by ELSA, 1:1 with child.
- ✓ A soft start to each day for the pupil.
- ✓ Referrals to external agencies seeking support.
- ✓ Involvement of SENCo – *support identifying any additional needs that may be presented.*

Penalty Notices

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

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.

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.

(DfE working together to improve school attendance 2024)

How will we encourage good attendance?

Furzefield Primary School will encourage good attendance by providing teaching and learning environments that are welcoming, secure, and stimulating. Pupils are respected and valued as individuals and supported to achieve. Wherever possible, additional support will be provided for more vulnerable groups.

We will raise awareness of the importance of attendance by:

- Making pupils aware of their attendance record so that they can take pride in improvement.
- Referring to good attendance in assemblies.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance in contacts with parents and carers.
- Sharing attendance figures with all families each term.
- Working closely with families where children are experiencing Emotional Based School Non Attendance (EBSNA).

We will incentivise and motivate pupils to value good attendance by:

- Intrinsically motivating pupils through reinforcing the importance of learning and how lifelong learning can help to achieve fulfilment and happiness in later life.
- Giving good attendance a high profile in school through:
 - Termly attendance assemblies, rewarding pupils with 100% attendance.
 - Celebrating most improved attendees per class each term.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school will collect, analyse, and report on attendance data to the Governing Body on a termly basis. A target for improving attendance rates is set annually, and evaluation of the success of the attendance policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

References

1. Education Act 1996
[Education Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
2. The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
3. Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2024
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
4. School attendance and absence
[School attendance and absence: Legal action to enforce school attendance - GOV.UK](#)
5. How long should you keep your child off school
[How long should you keep your child off school - checklist poster \(text version\) - GOV.UK](#)