



SOUTH CAMBERLEY PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

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Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2025-2026

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1. Introduction/Aim

Our Vision: A relentless ambition to raise standards and create a school of excellence where all are safe and want to learn

Our Mission: Our aim is to provide opportunities for every child to succeed through high quality teaching and the development of an engaging and relevant curriculum. We nurture each individual to become confident, ambitious lifelong learners who are responsible, kind and are prepared for the future.

At South Camberley Primary and Nursery School we firmly believe that excellent attendance and punctuality plays a crucial part in helping our pupils to reach their full potential and expand their future life choices. We will do all we can to support parents to ensure their children achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any issues that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon promptly.

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information appropriately. We will work in partnership with other agencies and professionals to ensure our pupils are safe and that they are participating in education.

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is supported by our policies on safeguarding, behaviour and inclusion. We are aware that non-attendance at school could be an indicator of a safeguarding risk or concern.

2. Legislation

2.1. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him or her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday and ceases to be so on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

2.2. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or, if not, the reason why they are not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

2.3 Attendance Legislation 2024

The Attendance Legislation 2024 represents a set of legal requirements introduced by the government to ensure that students maintain consistent and meaningful engagement in their education. Schools are legally obligated to comply with the regulations set forth in this legislation to foster a learning environment that prioritizes student welfare and academic success.

Key Provisions of the Attendance Legislation 2024

1. Mandatory School Attendance

The Attendance Legislation mandates that all students between the ages of 5 and 18 must attend school regularly unless exempted under specific circumstances outlined by the law. Parents and guardians are required to ensure that their child attends school consistently and punctually.

2. **Registration of Absences**

Schools are required to maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of student attendance. Any absence must be properly documented, and a legitimate reason must be provided within a specified period. This includes notifying the school of the absence within a set timeframe and providing supporting documentation when necessary (e.g., medical certificates).

3. **Categories of Absences**

The legislation distinguishes between authorised and unauthorised absences.

- **Authorised Absences:** These include illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, or other circumstances approved by the school or the local education authority.
- **Unauthorised Absences:** These refer to absences without valid justification or when no notice is given to the school.

4. **Early Intervention**

In accordance with the legislation, schools are required to intervene promptly when a student's attendance falls below acceptable levels. This may involve engaging with parents or guardians to identify the root cause of frequent absences and offering appropriate support, such as counselling or access to community resources.

5. **Penalties for Non-Compliance**

The legislation includes specific penalties for both students and parents if attendance laws are violated. Schools are required to refer chronic absenteeism to local authorities, which may result in fines or other legal actions. In extreme cases, educational neglect may be considered, and further legal steps may be taken.

6. **Support for Vulnerable Students**

The Attendance Legislation 2024 emphasizes providing additional support to students facing barriers to attendance, including those with health issues, disabilities, or mental health concerns. Schools must ensure that these students are not penalized for factors beyond their control and may offer alternative educational provisions or flexible learning arrangements when appropriate.

7. **Technology and Monitoring**

Schools are encouraged to leverage technology to improve attendance tracking and management. This includes using digital platforms for real-time attendance monitoring, automated notifications to parents for unexplained absences, and data analytics to identify trends in absenteeism at the earliest opportunity.

Impact on School Policy

In compliance with the Attendance Legislation 2024, our school will:

- Regularly monitor student attendance and provide early intervention for those at risk of falling behind.
- Ensure that all absences are recorded accurately and justified with proper documentation.
- Provide support for students who face challenges to consistent attendance, ensuring that no student is unfairly penalized for circumstances beyond their control.
- Work in partnership with families to address attendance concerns and prevent unnecessary disruptions to the student's educational progress.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

At South Camberley Primary and Nursery School, we believe that improved school attendance is a responsibility shared by governors, school staff, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

3.1 The Local Advisory Committee

The committee members will:

- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure relevant legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets
- Monitor the school's attendance through termly reporting at Governors' meetings

3.2 Our staff

Our staff will:

- Promote and encourage excellent attendance and punctuality through positive teaching and learning experiences that support all pupils to attend and achieve their potential
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for pupils
- Nurture positive relationships with pupils and their parents
- Monitor every pupil's attendance and follow agreed school attendance management strategies
- Consult with parents regarding their child's attendance and welfare
- Work in partnership with parents to resolve any difficulties relating to their child's attendance
- Utilise appropriate interventions to support pupils and parents with improved attendance
- Comply with current legislation and regulations when recording the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site. This data will be analysed and reviewed in school and shared with the DfE and LA in line the Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.
- Ensure registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner
- Refer irregular attendance or unjustified patterns of absence to the school's education welfare provider and/or Surrey County Council

3.3 Parents¹

The school expects parents will:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time and every day except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

¹ By parents, we mean parents or carers and this includes:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- all those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person;
- those who have day to day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

- Promote the values of a good education and excellent school attendance within the home environment and to be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure any child in their care arrives at school appropriately prepared for the day (including extra-curricular activities) and having completed any homework they have been given
- Contact the school office on their child's first day of absence and each subsequent day to notify the reason for the absence and the expected date of their child's return to school
- Provide medical evidence, or other documentary evidence, to support their child's absence, where this has specifically been requested
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making all non-urgent medical and dental appointments outside of school hours
- Notify the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance or welfare, including ensure that the school holds at least two emergency contact numbers for their child and updating these when needed.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of school or home life
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss their child's attendance and welfare
- Inform the school of any change of address and/or telephone number

3.3 Pupils

The school expect pupils will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Speak to their class teacher, or another member of staff, if they are experiencing any difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance or welfare
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late

4. Attendance Procedures

4.1 Expected absence procedure for parents

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly however, if a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to:

- Telephone the school office on 01276 63870 by 9.30am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day to report the reason for the absence and the expected date of return
- When requested, provide medical evidence, or other supporting documentation, that supports the level of absence. Examples of medical evidence include a dated medical appointment card, a photocopy of a signed and dated prescription, labelled medication packaging, a note or computer printout from a GP/Hospital confirming your child has been seen, together with the reason.

If there is no contact from the parent, the Attendance Protocol will be instigated.

4.2 Attendance Protocol

Where a pupil is absent without explanation, the school will respond as follows:

- The first day contact procedure will be activated for all pupils who are not in school by the close of register. Pupils are included due to historic poor attendance and/or safeguarding concerns.
- If there is no response following the first day contact procedure, the school will contact the pupil's named first & second contact.
- If, by the end of the school day, the school has not had communication with the parent or carer, the absence will be marked as an unauthorised absence.
- If any pupil leaves the school site without permission, the school will contact parents and take appropriate action to ensure the pupil's safety and welfare. If the child is not found within 30 minutes, the police will be informed.
- If the school deems that there could be risk to the child who is not in school, under our duty of care, we

reserve the right to:

- Carry out a safeguarding home visit or contact the police and/or social services where there are concerns for the immediate safety and welfare of the pupil.
- Write to the parents to highlight attendance or punctuality issues
- Require parents to provide medical evidence, or other documentation, to support the level of absence.
- Invite parents to a meeting to discuss how the school can support improved attendance.
- Refer parents to the school's Inclusion Team for informal intervention.
- Refer to an external agency to offer support, guidance and advice.
- Refer to Surrey County Council requesting a penalty notice or to consider prosecution

4.3 First Day Calling

To safeguard all pupils and ensure their well-being, South Camberley Primary School follows a First Day Calling procedure for all unexplained absences.

What is First Day Calling?

First Day Calling is a safeguarding measure where the school contacts parents or carers if a child is absent and the school has not been informed of the reason.

Procedure:

1. Parent Responsibility:
Parents/carers must contact the school by 9.30 on the first day of absence, stating the reason for their child's absence and their expected return date.
2. School Follow-Up:
If a child is absent and no message has been received:
 - The school will make initial contact by phone with the parent/carer as soon as possible after registers close.
 - If contact is not successful, the school will attempt to reach other emergency contacts.
 - If no contact can be made and the child's whereabouts remain unknown, the school may carry out a home visit or contact relevant agencies (such as the Education Welfare Service or Children's Social Care) in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.
3. Persistent Absences Without Explanation:
Repeated failure to report absences or respond to first day calls may be treated as a safeguarding concern and could result in a referral to external agencies.

Safeguarding Reminder:

Unexplained absences can pose a risk to a child's safety. Our First Day Calling system is a critical part of our duty of care and our commitment to keeping children safe in education.

4.4 Late Arrival in School

South Camberley Primary and Nursery School expects all pupils to arrive on time every day of the school year. The school registers open and close at the following times

- James Road Infants opens at 8.45am and closes at 9.15am
- France Hill Drive Infants opens at 8.45am and closes at 9.15am
- Frimley Road Juniors opens at 8.45am and closes at 9.15am Registers will close 30 minutes after the official start time.

The school day begins promptly, and we advise parents to ensure their child is in school on time for registration as above. Any pupil arriving after this time is required to report to the reception with their parent, who will be expected to enter the reason for their child's late arrival on the school's Inventory system.

If the pupil arrives after the register has been taken, they will receive a late mark (L code - late before the close of register). Any pupil arriving on or after the close of register will be marked as absent for the entire morning session (U code - late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence.

Parents will be contacted to discuss any pattern of late arrival. Repeated late arrival after the close of registration may result in a Penalty Notice or prosecution being pursued by Surrey County Council.

4.5 Support Systems

The attendance of all pupils at the school is monitored, and where concerns are identified, the school will work with families to explore the reasons for the absences and to try and resolve any difficulties. The school recognises that irregular attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family and/or

child's life. This may be related to problems at home or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

The school understands that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance and will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.

Strategies used may include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Reward systems
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages
- Attendance contracts
- Engaging the support of other agencies
- Referral to Surrey County Council

We aim to work in partnership with families by offering support that is child focused and planned in discussion and agreement with parents.

4.6 Pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

School staff play a critical role in communicating this expectation to parents. They should also work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible. Schools may also find it helpful to refer to DfE's non-statutory guidance on mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance for case study examples. 56.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long-term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided.

In developing this support, the usual processes relevant to any attendance case apply:

- Understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family
- Working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with Surrey LA and other agencies where external support is needed (and available)
- Regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.

In cases of both long term physical or mental ill health, school staff are not expected to diagnose or treat physical or mental health conditions, but they are expected to work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for every pupil. They should:

- Facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying health issue.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.

- Consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance.
- Make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

For pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, We:

- Work in partnership with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate.

If the child has an education health and care plan, school staff should:

- Communicate with the local authority where a pupil's attendance falls or they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Where possible, agree adjustments to its policies and practices that are consistent with the special educational provision set out in the education health and care plan in collaboration with parents.
- Where needed, work with the local authority to review and amend the education health and care plan to incorporate the additional or different attendance support identified.

Medical evidence for recording absences should only be needed in a minority of cases (see Code I). Where a pupil's health need means they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, schools can seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision in line with the statutory guidance in supporting pupils at school with medical conditions or arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.

Where parents do not engage in support, schools should work with the local authority or other local partners to formalise that support and as a last resort, enforce attendance through legal intervention

Schools should ensure data is regularly monitored for pupils with long term illnesses and or special educational needs or disabilities including at board and governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.

4.7. Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In some circumstances their education may be provided partially at school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as

much education as possible. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.

If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

4.6 Threshold for formal intervention

As a school we have high expectations around attendance and have an overall goal of 96% across the school.

To better monitor attendance and offer support to parents, we have set attendance goals for each term of the academic year. If a child's attendance drops below this threshold they will be contacted by the school to implement measures to improve attendance to prevent children missing a significant part of their learning.

The thresholds for South Camberley Primary School are 90% for the Autumn Term, 92% for the Spring Term and 94% for the Summer term.

Our Process:

- Should attendance remain a concern, a call will be made to the parent/carer by the class teacher to offer support.
- This will be followed by a second letter, which requires medical evidence to be provided for any absence so that any future absences from illness are authorized.
- Should there be no improvement; the parents will be invited to an informal meeting with the Attendance leads to implement strategies to improve attendance.
- If there is still no improvement to the child's attendance, the parents will be invited to a formal panel meeting with potential referral to Surrey County Council if no improvement is seen thereafter

Examples of when the school may require a parent to provide medical evidence are as follows:

- Pupils whose attendance was below 90% at the end of the previous academic (Persistent Absentee)
- Pupils whose attendance is currently below 90% (Persistent Absentee)
- Pupils who have had 3 separate periods of illness in a 6-week period
- Pupils who are absent from school immediately preceding or following a school holiday.
- Pupils who have a pattern of absence on a specific day
- Pupils who are absent for 3 or more consecutive days
- Pupils who have been late twice or more in a 2-week period

If a parent fails or refuses to engage and attendance remains a concern, a referral will be made to Surrey County Council for consideration of legal sanctions, which may be in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1996, parents found guilty in a Magistrates Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school will receive a criminal record and a fine of up to £1000 for an offence under a Section 444 (1) or a fine of up to £2500 or a maximum of 3 months imprisonment for an offence under Section 444 (1a).

4.7 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 requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Circumstances when Penalty Notices may be issued:

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged in Truancy Patrols and 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.

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 'Penalty Notice letter' 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. I
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. I
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. I
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

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. The amount payable is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. 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.

4. Leave of Absence

5.1 Legislation

In line with the Attendance Legislation 2024, we aim to support pupils' education while also ensuring compliance with national regulations regarding pupil attendance. This section outlines the procedures for requesting and granting leave of absence during term time.

Legal Framework for Leave of Absence

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, amended in 2013, schools are not permitted to authorise term-time holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Attendance Legislation 2024 further emphasizes the importance of maintaining regular school attendance and the limitations on granting leave during term time.

Any leave of absence granted due to "exceptional circumstances" is done so entirely at the discretion of the Executive Head Teacher or Head of Site who will determine the number of days your child can be absent. The regulations do not allow for retrospective approval to be given and therefore a written application must be made to the Executive Head Teacher or Head of Site in advance of the leave being requested.

Should a leave of absence be taken without having obtained the prior permission of the Executive Head Teacher or Head of Site, or your child is kept away for longer than was approved, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the matter may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of prosecution or a Penalty Notice may be issued.

A Penalty Notice is a fine of £80 **per parent per child** if paid within the first 21 days of issue, which rises to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

The Local Authority will consider taking legal action if the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days of the date of issue. Legal action may result in a fine of up to £1,000 and a criminal record for each parent.

5.2 Requesting a leave of absence

Parents who need to request an absence for their child during term time should complete the form entitled, "Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances". This must, *wherever possible*, be submitted to the Executive Head Teacher or Head of Site at least 2 weeks prior to the leave date. The Head of Site, who may consult with the Executive Head Teacher and Education Welfare Officer, will consider the circumstances of the request and decide whether or not to authorise the absence. Each request will be considered separately and any decision to grant a leave of absence is done so entirely at the discretion of the Executive Head Teacher or Head of Site.

School holidays are published a year in advance and are available from the school office and on the school's website. Family holidays are not deemed to be exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.

5.3 Types of Leave of Absence

Leave of absence can be requested for:

- Exceptional Family Circumstances (e.g., a close family member's funeral, serious illness of a family member).
- We will authorise one day per academic year for Religious Observance (e.g., for a religious holiday not observed during school holidays).
- Medical Reasons (when a pupil requires treatment or intervention that cannot be scheduled during school holidays).
- Exceptional Personal Circumstances (e.g., a once-in-a-lifetime event, such as a sibling's wedding, where the timing is critical).

5.4 Approval Process

- Headteacher's Discretion: The Headteacher has the discretion to grant or deny a request for leave

of absence based on the nature of the request, the child's current attendance record, and the timing of the absence.

- **Exceptional Circumstances:** For any request to be considered, the circumstances must be deemed truly exceptional. The school reserves the right to ask for additional supporting documentation (e.g., a letter from a doctor, or an invitation to a family event).

5.5 Unauthorised Leave of Absence

If leave is taken without prior approval from the Headteacher or for non-exceptional reasons, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. In this case, the school may take the following steps:

- **Reminder Letter:** A letter will be sent to the parent/carer outlining the unauthorised absence and the potential consequences.
- **Penalties:** Where leave is taken for holidays during term time without approval, a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority.

5. Deletions from the Register

A pupil can lawfully be removed from the school's roll when it has been established that one of the specified criteria under Section 8 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, has been met.

6.1 Moving School

Where parents decide to send their child to a different school, it is important that they inform South Camberley Primary and Nursery School as soon as possible. The pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will leave South Camberley Primary and Nursery School
- The name and address of the pupil's new school
- The pupil's new home address (if applicable)

An in-year transfer form is available to download through the Surrey County Council website and should be completed by the parent and Head of Site.

6.2 Children Missing from Education

All professionals working with children have a responsibility to ensure a child's wellbeing and to remain vigilant to their safety and welfare both inside and outside of school. When a pupil is absent from school for a substantial period of time and their whereabouts is unknown, South Camberley Primary and Nursery School will follow Surrey County Council's Children Missing from Education (CME) procedures. This will involve carrying out joint enquiries with Surrey County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

6.3 Elective Home Education

If a parent wishes to Electively Home Educate (EHE) their child, the school will de-register the child at the point written notification is received from the parent expressing their intention to do so. School will then notify Surrey County Council and after 10 days the child will be taken off roll. If a child has an Education Health and Care Plan, school will notify Surrey County Council of the parents' wishes to Electively Home Educate and the Surrey County Council Inclusion Team will carry out their enquiries before advising school to off roll the child.

The school will meet with relevant agencies and parents prior to a decision being made on whether to electively home educate the child.

6. Legal Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- School Attendance, Department for Education (May 2022)
- School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures: Statutory Guidance, Department for Education (January 2017)
- Surrey County Council's Children Missing Education Practice & Procedures
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, Department for Education (September 2022)
- Working Together to improve School Attendance (DfE, August 2024)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

This Attendance Policy is underpinned by statutory guidance and national legislation designed to promote regular school attendance, safeguard children, and support their right to education. South Camberley Primary School is committed to complying with all legal requirements in relation to pupil attendance and punctuality.

Key Legislation and Guidance:

1. Attendance Legislation 2024

The most recent national legislation governing school attendance. It reinforces the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance, mandates school responsibilities in monitoring and reporting attendance, and outlines the powers of local authorities to issue penalties where necessary.

2. Education Act 1996

Section 444 of the Act places a legal duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude—either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

3. Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 *(as amended)*

These regulations require schools to maintain accurate admission and attendance registers and detail the procedures for managing pupil registration, authorising absence, and reporting poor attendance to the local authority.

4. Children and Families Act 2014

Gives schools and local authorities the power to issue penalty notices to parents/carers for unauthorised absences and non-compliance with attendance improvement measures.

5. School Attendance: Guidance for Schools (DfE) – 2024 Edition

Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, and local authorities on how to maintain high levels of attendance, identify concerns early, and engage effectively with families.

6. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE 2025)

Regular attendance is a key part of safeguarding children. Unexplained or prolonged absence can be a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Schools must act promptly in line with their safeguarding procedures when attendance concerns arise.

7. Equality Act 2010

Schools must ensure that attendance procedures and decisions do not discriminate against pupils with protected characteristics and that reasonable adjustments are made where appropriate.

Annex A

7. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

8.1 Regular Attendance:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

8.2 Absence:

- Not attending school for any reason
- Arriving at school after the register has closed

8.3 Authorised Absence:

The school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. Examples of authorised absence:

- An absence due to illness or significant injury
- Urgent medical or dental appointments
- Religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances or unavoidable cause
- Formal exclusion from school

8.4 Unauthorised Absence:

The school has not been provided with an explanation for the pupil's absence or is not satisfied with the reasons given. Examples of unauthorised absence:

- Absences that have not been properly explained
- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy, or an unwillingness to attend school.
- Shopping, birthdays or looking after other children.
- Holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
- Illness where medical evidence has been requested but not provided.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Due to parent illness/ can't bring child to school/ appointments during school time.

8.5 Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil is classed as a "persistent absentee" when their attendance falls to 90% or below for any reason. Over the course of an academic year this equates to 38 missed sessions (19 school days)

8.6 Parent:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person as defined by the Children Act 1989
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child

Annex B

Penalty Notice regulations Notice for parents

Appendix 3: Attendance and Absence Codes

On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code are entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admission register at the time.

Code	Reason for use
/\	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual Registered at another school
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure