



SOUTH CAMBERLEY PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

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Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2026-2027

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1. Introduction and aims

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 a confident, ambitious lifelong learner who is responsible, kind and prepared for the future.

South Camberley Primary and Nursery School believes that regular attendance and punctuality are central to pupils' education, wellbeing and safeguarding. We will work in partnership with pupils, parents, Surrey County Council and other agencies to identify barriers early, provide appropriate support and, where necessary, use formal intervention.

Attendance concerns may be an indicator of wider safeguarding or welfare needs. This policy should therefore be read alongside the school's safeguarding, behaviour, SEND, medical needs and inclusion policies.

2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy reflects the law and statutory guidance in force in England for the 2026/27 academic year, including:

- Education Act 1996, including sections 7 and 444.
- Education Act 2002.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.

- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.
- Children and Families Act 2014 where relevant to pupils with education, health and care plans.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, including the 2024 amendments.
- Department for Education statutory guidance: Working together to improve school attendance (updated July 2026).
- Department for Education statutory guidance: Keeping children safe in education 2026.
- Department for Education statutory guidance: Children missing education (updated September 2025).
- Surrey County Council's current Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for school absence and local attendance procedures.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to secure an efficient full-time education suitable to their child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The 2024 registration regulations require schools to maintain electronic admission and attendance registers and to use the prescribed national attendance and absence codes.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Local Advisory Committee / Governing Body

- Review this policy at least annually and ensure that the school meets its statutory attendance duties.
- Monitor attendance data and the effectiveness of the school's attendance strategy.
- Hold school leaders to account for attendance and ensure appropriate resources are available.

3.2 Executive Headteacher and senior attendance leadership

- Ensure a senior leader has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Ensure attendance expectations, procedures and escalation routes are clear to staff, pupils and parents.
- Oversee the use of attendance data to identify patterns and pupils who may need support.
- Ensure that statutory returns, register processes and local authority notifications are completed accurately and on time.

3.3 School staff

- Promote good attendance and punctuality and provide a welcoming, safe learning environment.
- Complete registers accurately and promptly using the national codes.
- Follow up unexplained absence and lateness in accordance with safeguarding procedures.
- Work with pupils and families to understand barriers to attendance and put support in place.
- Escalate concerns to attendance and safeguarding leads and work with external agencies where appropriate.

3.4 Parents and carers

- Ensure their child attends regularly and arrives on time, unless there is a valid reason for absence.
- Contact the school office by 9:30am on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day unless otherwise agreed, giving the reason and expected return date.
- Keep the school informed of changes to contact details and provide at least two emergency contacts where possible.
- Avoid non-urgent medical and dental appointments during the school day.
- Request any leave of absence in advance and provide supporting information where appropriate.
- Engage with school support where attendance or punctuality is a concern.

3.5 Pupils

- Attend regularly and arrive punctually.
- Be ready to learn and follow the school's late-arrival procedure.
- Speak to a trusted member of staff if difficulties at school or home are affecting attendance.

4. Attendance procedures

4.1 Reporting absence

Parents/carers should telephone the school office on 01276 63870 by 9:30am on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day unless a different arrangement has been agreed. The reason for absence and, where known, the expected return date should be provided.

Medical evidence is not routinely required for every illness. The school may request reasonable evidence where there are genuine doubts about the reason for absence, where support needs to be understood, or where evidence is needed for a particular attendance decision. Requests will be proportionate and considered in the context of the pupil's individual circumstances.

4.2 First-day response and safeguarding

- Where a pupil is absent and no reason has been received, the school will make contact as soon as practicable after the morning register closes.
- If contact is not made, the school will try other emergency contacts and consider further reasonable enquiries.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns or a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established, the school will act without delay in line with its safeguarding procedures. This may include a home visit and/or contact with Children's Social Care, the police, the local authority attendance service or other relevant agencies.
- The response will be based on the known risk and circumstances of the individual child; the school will not rely on a fixed waiting period where immediate action is required.

4.3 Registration and punctuality

The gate timings remain 8:30am-8:45am.

The morning classroom registration window opens at 8:45am and closes at 8:55am. Pupils should be in class and ready for registration by 8:45am. For attendance coding purposes, the statutory morning attendance register remains open until 9:15am.

Arrival time	Procedure	Attendance mark
8:30am-8:45am	Enter through the normal school gate; registration is taken from 8:45am.	Present when registered
After 8:45am and before 8:55am	Go directly to class during the registration window.	Present when registered
8:55am-9:15am	Sign in at the school office.	L - late before the register closes
After 9:15am	Sign in at the school office.	U - arrived after the register closed, where no other attendance code applies

Code U is statistically classified as unauthorised absence for the morning session. If another national attendance or absence code properly applies to the circumstances, that code will be used instead. Persistent lateness will be monitored and addressed through the school's attendance procedures.

4.4 Attendance support

The school will use a support-first approach. Where attendance becomes a concern, staff will seek to understand the barriers affecting the pupil and family, agree appropriate actions, review progress and involve local authority or other services where additional support is needed.

- discussion with the pupil and parents/carers;
- pastoral, learning, SEND or behaviour support;
- reasonable adjustments where required;
- reintegration or time-limited phased-return planning where appropriate;
- attendance meetings, attendance contracts or other agreed plans;
- multi-agency support and referral to Surrey County Council where necessary.

4.5 Health, SEND and disability

Pupils with physical or mental health conditions, SEND or disabilities have the same right to education as other pupils, but may need additional or different support to attend. The school will work with the pupil, parents, the local authority and relevant professionals to understand barriers, make reasonable adjustments where required by the Equality Act 2010, and review support regularly.

Where a pupil is recorded as absent because of illness and there are reasonable grounds to believe they will miss 15 consecutive school days, or their cumulative illness absence in the current school year will reach 15 school days, the school will make the required sickness return to the local authority.

4.6 Part-time timetables

A part-time timetable will be used only in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests and is part of a wider support, health-care or reintegration plan. It will not be used to manage behaviour. It must be time-limited, regularly reviewed, have a clear plan to increase education towards full-time provision, and be agreed with the parent with whom the pupil normally lives. Where the pupil has a social worker or an EHC plan, the relevant professional or local authority will be involved as required.

4.7 Monitoring thresholds and intervention

The school's overall attendance ambition is 96%. This is a school improvement ambition, not a legal threshold. Nationally, a pupil is persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of possible sessions, and severely absent when they miss 50% or more. The school will not wait for a pupil to reach these levels before offering support. Attendance data will be reviewed regularly to identify emerging patterns, including repeated lateness, day-specific absence, unexplained absence and declining attendance. Intervention will be proportionate to need and will prioritise early support.

5. Leave of absence

5.1 General rule

Leave of absence during term time will only be granted in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Holidays in term time are not authorised as holidays. A leave request may only be granted where the applicable statutory circumstances are met, including exceptional circumstances where relevant.

5.2 Requests

Requests should be made in writing to the Executive Headteacher or Head of Site in advance, normally at least two weeks before the proposed absence where this is practicable. Each request will be considered individually on its facts. Where leave is granted, the school will determine the number of days authorised. Retrospective leave cannot normally be granted where the regulations require prior permission.

5.3 Religious observance

Absence for religious observance will be recorded in accordance with the national attendance codes. Code R applies where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. The school does not apply a blanket limit of one religious-observance day per academic year; the correct code will be determined from the circumstances and the national coding rules.

5.4 Medical and dental appointments

Parents should arrange routine appointments outside school hours where possible. Where a pupil must attend a medical or dental appointment during the school day, the appropriate national code will be used for the necessary period of absence.

5.5 Unauthorised leave

Where leave is taken without permission, or beyond the period authorised, the absence will be recorded using the appropriate unauthorised code. The school may refer the matter to Surrey County Council for consideration under the national penalty notice framework or other legal intervention.

6. Admission register, children missing education and elective home education

6.1 Deletion from the admission register

A pupil's name will only be deleted from the admission register when a ground in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is met. The school will make the required returns to the local authority and will carry out or support reasonable enquiries where required before deletion.

6.2 Moving school

Parents should tell the school as soon as possible if their child is moving school and provide the leaving date, the name and address of the new school and any change of home address. The school will follow statutory transfer and local authority procedures before removing the pupil from roll.

6.3 Children missing education

Where a pupil's whereabouts or education cannot be established, the school will work with Surrey County Council immediately to make reasonable enquiries and follow the current statutory Children Missing Education guidance. A pupil who remains registered at this school but is persistently or severely absent is not, solely for that reason, a 'child missing education' under the statutory definition; however, their absence may still create significant safeguarding and attendance concerns.

6.4 Elective home education

Where a parent notifies the school in writing that their child will cease attending after a specified day in order to receive education otherwise than at school, and the statutory ground for deletion is met, the school will delete the pupil's name from the admission register and notify the local authority as required. There is no general 10-day waiting period before deletion. Different requirements apply where a pupil attends a special school under local authority arrangements or where a School Attendance Order is in force.

7. Legal intervention and penalty notices

Legal intervention is considered where support is not appropriate, has not worked, or has not been engaged with, and where the legal tests are met. In Surrey, penalty notices for school absence are issued by Surrey County Council in accordance with its local Code of Conduct.

7.1 National threshold

A penalty notice must be considered when a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions can be consecutive or non-consecutive and may span terms or school years. The relevant unauthorised codes are G, N, O and U, alone or in combination. Reaching the threshold does not mean a penalty notice is automatic: the individual circumstances, support and the most appropriate intervention must be considered.

7.2 Penalty amounts and limits

- First penalty notice for the same parent and child within a rolling three-year period: £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days.
- Second penalty notice for the same parent and child within the rolling three-year period: £160, payable within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice will not normally be issued for the same parent and child within the rolling three-year period; prosecution or another legal intervention may instead be considered.
- Failure to pay a penalty notice may lead to prosecution for the underlying attendance offence.

Where prosecution is pursued under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, the court determines the outcome and any sentence within the statutory limits. The school will avoid presenting prosecution or penalty notices as automatic consequences.

8. Monitoring, support and equality

The school will monitor attendance and punctuality for individuals and groups, identify emerging concerns early, and evaluate whether support is improving attendance. Particular care will be taken to ensure that attendance practice does not discriminate against pupils with protected characteristics and that reasonable adjustments are considered where required.

The Local Advisory Committee / Governing Body will receive attendance information at appropriate intervals. This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if legislation, statutory guidance or local procedures change.

Annex A - Definitions

Regular attendance: Attendance at every session the school is open to the pupil unless an absence is properly recorded using an applicable national attendance or absence code.

Absence: A pupil is absent from a session where the national coding rules classify the session as absence, including unauthorised late arrival after the register has closed.

Authorised absence: An absence recorded using a national code that is statistically classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence: An absence recorded using a national code that is statistically classified as unauthorised, including codes G, N, O and U.

Persistent absence: Missing 10% or more of possible school sessions.

Severe absence: Missing 50% or more of possible school sessions.

Parent: For attendance law, this includes a natural parent and a person who has parental responsibility for, or care of, the child.

Annex B - National attendance and absence codes

The school will use the national attendance and absence codes prescribed under the 2024 Regulations and current DfE statutory guidance. The summary below is included for operational reference; where guidance changes, the current statutory coding rules take precedence.

Code	Reason for use
/	Present at school - morning session
\	Present at school - afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register has 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 another approved educational activity
C1	Leave for a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
M	Leave for a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave for an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
S	Leave for study leave for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school-age pupil not required to attend
C2	Leave for a compulsory school-age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered at another school
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded
Q	Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend because transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend because part of the school premises is closed
Y4	Unable to attend because the whole school site is unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend because the pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Y7	Unable to attend because of another 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 after the register has closed, where no other code applies
Z	Prospective pupil not on the admission register

South Camberley morning timing summary

- Gates: 8:30am-8:45am.
- Classroom registration window: 8:45am-8:55am.
- After 8:55am: pupils must sign in at the school office.
- 8:55am-9:15am: Code L (late before the statutory morning register closes).
- After 9:15am: Code U where no other attendance code applies.

Document sources checked for this update

This 2026/27 revision was checked against the current DfE statutory attendance guidance (updated 9 July 2026), Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026), Children Missing Education statutory guidance (updated 8 September 2025), the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended in 2024, and Surrey County Council's current penalty notice Code of Conduct.