



The Horsell Village School

Attendance Policy

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Policy Aims

The school staff, alongside the Swan Trust and Local Authority, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. We endeavour to provide a school day which allows children to take risks, challenge thinking and ask questions about the world around them. We aim for all individuals to build the foundations of a lifelong learner and to always have high expectations of themselves.

We aim for all pupils within our school setting to achieve maximum attendance and school staff work closely with families to identify any barriers that may prevent this. We always act promptly and swiftly to ensure that these barriers are overcome with the best outcome for the pupil.

Regular attendance is key to achieving the best outcomes for pupils. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we will encourage parents to ensure that their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regard to school attendance through our whole school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Every child has access to full time education in which they are entitled to
- Reducing absences, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Promoting and supporting good punctuality.

Legislation and Guidance

This is based on the Department of Education's statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Roles & Responsibilities

The Local Governing Committee

The Local Governing Committee is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most

- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development on offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners, and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary and appropriate, and/or authorising Surrey County Council to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance 'Attendance Champion'

The Designated Senior Leader (also known as the 'Senior Attendance Champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/ carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance

- Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising Surrey County Council if and when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Jane Reeve who can be contacted via the school office:- reception@horsell-village.surrey.sch.uk

Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance for morning and afternoon sessions daily, using the correct codes and submitting information to the school office
- Discussing attendance concerns that are impacting children's progress in learning, with parents / carers

School Admin / Office staff

School Admin / Office staff are responsible for:

- Tracking school absence reporting on a day-to-day basis
- Following the school's First Day Calling Protocol if a child's absence has not been reported or if further information is required
- Informing the Headteacher and school's Designated Safeguarding team to implement first day calling protocols of home visits and welfare checks

Community Expectations

All pupils must:

- Attend school everyday
- Arrive at school on time
- Arrive at school ready to learn

All parents / carers will:

- Encourage 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 report their child's absence before **9.00 am** on the day of absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return, www.horsell-village.surrey.sch.uk/parents/attendance
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any Attendance Assessments & Contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Attendance Champion- Mrs Jane Reeve through reception@horsell-village.surrey.sch.uk

The school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's or parent's concerns
- Keep regular and accurate records of morning and afternoon attendance and punctuality
- Monitor individual pupil's attendance and punctuality

- Contact parents when a pupil fails to attend school and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school 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
- Regularly inform parents of the percentage attendance of the school
- Make initial enquiries with parents regarding pupils who are not attending regularly
- Meet regularly with the Inclusion Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Investigate irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance
- Meet the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child – by ensuring that, whenever possible, students are consulted in all the decisions that relate to them

Attendance Recording

The attendance of all pupils is recorded daily.

Registers are taken at the start of the first session of each school day (9.00 am) and at the start of every afternoon session. (1.00 pm)

It will mark whether the pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Children must arrive in school by **8.50 am** on each school day.

The morning register will close at **9.00 am** and the afternoon register at **1.00 pm**.

Children arriving after **9.00 am** will be marked as late after registers close.

Children arriving between **8.50 am** and **9.00 am** will be marked as late before registers close.

Children's attendance at school is closely monitored. The following codes, taken from the DfE guidance on school attendance, are used at school to monitor each child's attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present am	Child is present at morning registration
\	Present pm	Child is present at afternoon registration
L	Late	Child arrives after 8.50 am but before register closes at 9.00 am
C	Authorised leave of absence	Child has an absence that has been authorised by the Headteacher
E	Excluded	Child has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
H	Authorised Holiday	Child has been authorised to go on holiday during term time. This would be the result of an exceptional circumstance
I	Illness	School has been notified that a child will be absent due to illness
M	Medical / dental appointment	Child is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious Observance	Child has been authorised to attend a religious observance
G	Unauthorised Holiday	Child is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
O	Unauthorised Absence	School is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil absence
U	Unauthorised Absence	Child arrives late after register has closed Reason provided for absence is not in line with school policy

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned Absences

- The parent / carer must notify the school of the reason for absence on the first day of any unplanned absence by **9.00 am** by completing the online absence form www.horsell-village.surrey.sch.uk/parents/attendance.
- Should no contact be made by **9.30 am**, the school will implement the '**First Day Calling Protocols**'
- We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness
- Where the absence is longer than **5 days**, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will seek medical evidence or other appropriate forms of evidence
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and the parent/carers will be notified

Planned Absences – Authorised

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as a planned absence and will be authorised as long as notification is given to the school in advance of the appointment.

Notification of appointments need to be shared with school via email and a leave of absence form may need to be completed. <https://www.horsell-village.surrey.sch.uk/parents/forms/>
Evidence will need to be provided in relation to the medical appointments being attended.

We encourage parents / carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours, where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Following up on unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent / carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will implement its first day calling protocols.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than five working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, the school will consider issuing notification of a penalty notice or other legal intervention to Surrey County Council.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- A temporary, time-bonded part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via <https://www.horsell-village.surrey.sch.uk/parents/forms/>. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travelers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travelers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveler family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Lateness and Punctuality

Punctuality at school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with their teacher is important. Lateness into school causes disruption to a pupils learning time in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

A pupil that arrives late:

- Before the register closes (between 8.50 am and 9.00 am) once doors are closed will be marked as late using the appropriate code- 'L' on the registration certificate.
- After the register has closed at 9.00 am will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.
- After 5 recorded late marks in a ½ term, a '**stage 1**' letter will go home to parents. This letter will act as a notification for improvement.
- After 8 recorded late marks in school term or no improvement after a stage 1 letter, a '**stage 2**' letter will be sent home. This will include an invitation for parents to come into school and discuss with the Headteacher the reasons for persistent lateness and a school Attendance Assessment and Contract will be developed.
- If lateness continues then the school will inform the Inclusion Officer who will work in collaboration with the family and school to improve the pupil's punctuality.
- Registers close at 9:00am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence – 'U' on the registration certificate (unless the reason for absence has been shared with the school)

First Day Calling Protocol

The First Day Calling Protocol is implemented on the first day of absence and as a result of the school not being informed of a child's absence from school.

1	8.00 am to 9.00 am	Parents / Carers to inform school for the reason of absence through school website reporting an absence form.
2	9.30 am to 12.00 noon	If no contact is made school will make every effort to obtain contact through working through the emergency contact list.
3	12.00 noon	If no contact has been made staff will move to a welfare check. This will be a home visit that will take place between 12.30 pm and 3.30pm
4	3.30 pm onwards	If no contact has been made as a result of a welfare check the school will move to it's safeguarding procedures and protocols. The absence would then be reported to Surrey Children's Services and the police to request a welfare call.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school or where a pupil has 10 unauthorised leave of absences within a period of 10 school weeks. It also relates to when a pupil has 5 recorded lates in a half term. A severe absence is when a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available

- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Complete an Attendance Assessment- identifying barriers to attendance and developing plans for removal of these barriers.
- Review any existing actions or interventions
- Develop an attendance contract for improvement
- Send letters of notice of improvement (Stage 1) and Stage 2 face-to-face meeting. Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be via:

- Parent conferences
- Half termly written attendance notification
- Annual School Record of Achievement

Process for Attendance Concerns

Stage 1: - School Attendance Concern

This letter is sent when a child's attendance falls below 90 % in a half term, or a child has 5 recorded lates after registration closes at 9.00 am.

This letter explains the importance of attending school regularly and explains how attendance will be closely monitored in the future and how an improvement is expected. Attendance will be reviewed after 3 weeks. If attendance has not improved after 3 weeks this will move to a stage 2.

Stage 2: - Meeting with the School Attendance Champion

This letter is sent when an improvement in attendance or lateness is not seen after a stage 1 letter and over a time of 3 weeks. This letter requests a meeting with the Attendance Champion where strategies to improve attendance will be discussed. Strategies will be actioned and again reviewed after a three-week period.

Stage 3: Attendance Assessment.

This assessment will be carried out with the family, developing a more formal plan to improve attendance. This may include support from external agencies such as the School Nurse Team, Early Help and the schools allocated Inclusion Officer.

Attendance will be reviewed after 3 weeks. If attendance has not improved after another 3 weeks this will move to stage 4. It is important to note at this stage if there is no evidence of a substantiated improvement in attendance, referral for a fixed penalty notice may be considered.

Stage 4: - Attendance Contract / Agreement.

At this stage an Attendance Contract under section 19 (2) of the Anti- Social Behaviour Act 2023 will be implemented. This is a formal agreement between the school and the parent / carer, which may include involvement from Surrey County Council Inclusion Team and Surrey Children's Services.

Stage 5:- Prosecution measures sought.

The school will inform Surrey County Council with a request to prosecute. This may be in the form of a fixed penalty fine. Should two fixed penalty fines be issued within one year prosecution for neglect against your child's education may be sought. In severe cases where there is no indication of supporting the school to improve attendance a referral to Surrey Attendance Service for prosecution for Neglect against your child's education will be made.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school makes the decision to issue a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of ten school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

- If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.
- If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance does not improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Monitoring Attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. The school has granted the DfE access to its' management information systems so that data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its' attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups, or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to the class teachers and Attendance Champion, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform The Horsell Village School as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next school
- The address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Local Authority Tracking Officer and Inclusion Officer monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed in line with guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships policy