

# Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School



## Attendance Policy

SHAS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all our children, and expects our staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Nominated Lead Member of Staff	Mrs Ratcliff, Headteacher
Policy Adopted by:	LGC
Status and Review Cycle:	Statutory Annual
Next Review	December 2020

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School firmly believes that all children benefit from regular school attendance. A child's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which school and home must seek to avoid. Research has shown that children who attend school regularly are likely to be more successful – in school and in their adult life. Children who miss schooling may also find it more difficult to maintain and develop friendships with their peers. To this end we will do all that we can to encourage parents / carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

- 1.1 Children are expected to attend 100% of the time unless the absence has been authorised by the Head Teacher (or delegated member of staff).
- 1.2 Parent/carers, whose children are of compulsory school (5 to 16) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or be served with a penalty notice.
- 1.3 When absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.4 In line with the Education Regulations (Children Registration) 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 sessions (5 days) or more are required to be reported to the local Authority. Schools are therefore required to report all absence figures to the local authority and the Department for Education (DfE) and to ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report.

## 2 EXPECTATIONS

### 2.1 We expect parents/carers to ensure that all children:

- 2.1.1. attend school regularly
- 2.1.2. attend school punctually
- 2.1.3. attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- 2.1.4. discuss with their class teacher or Head Teacher any problems preventing them from attending school

### 2.2 We expect all parents/cares who have responsibility for the children to:

- 2.2.1. encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- 2.2.2 ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day
- 2.2.3. contact the school by 9.30am for every day on which any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school
- 2.2.4. provide appropriate evidence to justify absences of 3 or more consecutive days
- 2.2.5. if required and requested by the school, provide appropriate evidence to justify frequent, short-term absences.

### **2.3 We expect that school staff will carry out the following duties relating to children attendance:**

- 2.3.1. Teaching staff will:
  - 2.3.1.1. keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all children, as required by law
  - 2.3.1.2. provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for children
  - 2.3.1.3. provide a sympathetic response to any children's concerns
- 2.3.2. School administrative staff will:
  - 2.3.2.1. monitor every children's attendance
  - 2.3.2.2. contact parents/carers as soon as possible for every morning a children fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- 2.3.3. The Head Teacher will:
  - 2.3.3.1. encourage good attendance through newsletters
  - 2.3.3.2. make initial enquiries to parents/carers of children who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance
  - 2.3.3.3. request evidence, if and when appropriate, to justify necessary periods of long-term or frequent absence
  - 2.3.3.4. refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the attached Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and involve the Home School Link Worker (HSLW) if appropriate
- 2.3.4. The Dorking Schools Partnership HSLW may:
  - 2.3.4.1. work with the attached EWO, follow up concerns about attendance by contacting or visiting parents/carers at home.

### **3 ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

- 3.1** If you know in advance that your child will be off school, e.g. for a prearranged medical appointment, please let the school know by telephone or in writing a least 24 hours in advance. It may be appropriate for the school to provide work for your child during this time.
- 3.2** If your child is absent for any reason, please phone the School Office by 9:30am on every day of their absence, giving your reason for keeping them at home. This is a child protection measure, to ensure all children on roll in school can be accounted for each day.
- 3.3** Parents/carers must complete an application for leave of absence form (available from the school office and on the school website) if they are intending to remove their child from school for any period of time. Please let the school have this form two weeks before the planned absence.

### **4 Failure to ensure regular school attendance**

Education Welfare may issue a Penalty Notice or prosecute parent/carers who are failing to secure their Child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or EWO's.

## 5 Exceptional Leave of Absence

- 5.1 School will only authorise leave of absence in term time in exceptional circumstances – (see appendix B).
- 5.2 Where a parent wishes to request a leave of absence, a formal request must be made on the appropriate form, in writing, to the Head Teacher who will consider the application on behalf of the Governors. All requests should be submitted to the Head Teacher at least two weeks before the first day of intended absence. If your child has siblings at another school also requesting leave of absence, you must state this on the request form so that the two or more schools can agree on their decision.

## 6 CATEGORIES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school is categorised as either authorised or unauthorised absence.

If you need to make a request to the Head Teacher for a period of authorised absence, you can pick up a form from the School office. Please submit your request to the Head Teacher as early as possible, so that there is time for the request to be considered and for approval to be given if appropriate.

## 7 Lateness

- 7.1 The doors open at the Abinger site at 8.30am with registration at 8.45am. The school gates are locked at 8.45am at Abinger. The doors open at the Westcott site at 9.00am with registration at 9.15am. The school gates are locked at 9.15am at the Westcott site – late arrivals should enter school via the office and need to be signed in to the book.
- 7.2 Afternoon lessons begin at 1.00pm in Years R – 2 at Abinger and at 12.55pm in Years 3 and 4 and 1.10pm in Years 5 and 6. Children who go home for lunch are expected to be back in school before afternoon registration.
- 7.3 Children who are constantly late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken.

## 8 MONITORING AND REPORTING PROBLEMS WITH ABSENCE

- 8.1 At the end of each half term, the school will analyse attendance data for all children. In line with the Education Regulations (Children Registration) 2006, all unauthorised absences of 10 days or more will be reported to the Local Authority.
- 8.2 Letters will be sent home to families if their child's absence is a cause for concern. Unless there are known exceptional circumstances (e.g. a long stay in hospital), this includes the following reasons:
  - 8.2.1 **If attendance is a cause for concern** a letter will be sent home to warn that attendance is a cause for concern and offer an appointment with the Head Teacher to discuss ways of supporting you to improve this.
  - 8.2.2 **If there is no improvement** a letter will be sent with a specific appointment offered to meet with Head Teacher and discuss any issues which may be affecting attendance. Parents will be asked to provide medical evidence in future if their child is off school due to illness, in order for absences to be authorised. If medical evidence is not provided, future absences for illness will not be authorised.
  - 8.2.3 **If, following stages 1 and 2, there are more than 10 unauthorised absences (half days) in a half term, within a rolling year,** a referral will be made to the EWO. A

letter will be sent inviting you to a meeting with the Head Teacher and Educational Welfare Officer to plan together for improvements.

- 8.2.4 **If there are 10 (sessions) or more unauthorised absences (5 days)** the school will instruct the local authority to assess the situation and take appropriate action.

## 9 Penalty Notices

- 9.1 The Education Welfare 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.
- 10.2. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of the receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- 10.3. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local Authority must consider prosecuting the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under section 444 Education Act 1996.

### 10.4 Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued

- 10.4.1. Children identified by police and EWOs engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- 10.4.2. The Education (Children Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions (5 days) 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. These absences do not have to be consecutive. 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.
- 10.4.3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a children has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare 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.

- 10.5 With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

- 10.5.1. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public space 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 £60.00 if paid within 21 days of the receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 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.

10.5.2. Parents will be informed of the school's absence procedures in detail upon joining the school, and provided with a copy of the Children Attendance Policy. The school will publish a termly reminder in its newsletter using the following wording:

*"just to remind parents that if there is an unauthorised leave of absence for 5 or more school days, each parent/carer will be liable to receive a penalty notice. Penalty notices are issued per parent / carer per child and the amount payable is £60.00 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but before 28 days, rising to £120.00 if paid after 28 days. If the penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority must consider a prosecution in the Magistrates Court".*

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## Children Missing in Education

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### School's Duties - **display in school office**

- Schools, including Academies and Free Schools, must monitor children's attendance through their daily register.
- School should agree with their local authority the intervals in which they will inform local authorities of the details of children who are **regularly absent** from school or have **missed 10 days** or more without permission.
- Schools must also notify the authority if a children is to be deleted from the admission register in certain circumstances.
- Children who remain on a school roll are not necessarily missing education but schools should monitor attendance and address it when it is poor.
- It is also important that children's irregular attendance is referred to the authority.
- Schools also have safeguarding duties under section 17 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their children, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.
- Schools also have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their children, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.
- Schools must also arrange full-time education for excluded children from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. This information can be found in the school exclusion guidance.

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At Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School, this guidance is used to inform:

- Daily attendance management
- Termly attendance management meetings between admin staff and HT
- Children Attendance Policy



### Application for Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

(Please read the following guidance carefully)

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, children are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

**Please be aware that the Education (Children Registration England Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law in September 2013 state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**

If you wish the Head Teacher to consider your request, for your child's leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances, please complete and submit this form to the school office. We may ask for proof to support your request. If you have children at both sites there is no need to complete two forms, all children should be included on one form.

#### **Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a penalty notice.**

Penalty notices are issued by the local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct. The penalty notice is £60 per child, per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court.

The Head Teacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and notify you of the decision.

For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Name of child:	Class:
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for (reason)	
From:	To:
Number of school days:	
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:	
Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? Yes / No	
If yes, please give dates and details:	
I also have children at the following school(s):	
Signed: (parent/carer)	Date: