

Woodlea Primary School Policy for Attendance

Reviewed by	LGC & HT
Reviewed in	June 24 & Autumn I 2024 & Autumn I 2025
Status & Review Cycle	2-year cycle
Next Review date	Autumn I 2026

Introduction

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%).

Legal responsibilities

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually.
- The LA has a legal duty to ensure that parents carry out this responsibility.
- The school has a legal duty to record absence of registered pupils in compliance with the regulations.
- The governing body has a legal duty to ensure the school register is kept in accordance with regulations and must set attendance targets which are then forwarded to the LA.

This policy supports the attendance responsibilities for parents, schools, academy trusts and governing bodies, and local authorities which are outlined in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

It is the parents' responsibility and their legal duty (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996) to ensure that their child receives full time education. We seek a partnership with parents to encourage good attendance and punctuality. To clarify roles and responsibilities, our whole school approach is summarised in [Appendix I](#)

The school attendance policy reflects that pupils are expected to attend 100% of the time, unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher (or delegated person in the school.) Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless these are considered to be for exceptional circumstances. Holidays are not authorised during term time. All partners will work together to:



Key Persons

Designated Senior Leader for Attendance:	Headteacher – Mrs N Gambier info@woodleatlt.co.uk
SENDSCO:	Miss J Rice senco@woodleatlt.co.uk
School Attendance Officer:	Mrs S Piscina info@woodleatlt.co.uk
School Attendance Officer (Surrey)	Ms Geraldine Davids geraldine.davids@surreycc.gov.uk
Exclusion Advice Officer	Richard Preston richard.preston@surreycc.gov.uk

Registers

The register is a legal document and is confidential. It may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. The registers are completed twice daily, using the Arbor attendance register, at the start of morning school and immediately after lunch break. A hard copy of the registers is printed every day.

The register should be completed by 8:50am (closed at 9.20am) each morning and by 1.15pm in the afternoon.

If access to Arbor is not available for any technical reason, a hard copy of the register should be completed and sent to the office.

Marks using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See **Appendix 2** for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Lateness

Children who arrive late must report to the office. If they arrive prior to the close of registration (9:20) they will be marked on the register as late by the attendance officer.

If children arrive after 8:50 they should be accompanied by an adult to the office where they will be signed in. If a child arrives without a parent/carer, the office will contact parents to remind them of the expectation. Repeated non-accompaniment, will be record on CPOMS as a safeguarding concern.

Children who arrive after 9.20am in the morning without good reason are recorded as an unauthorised absence.

To minimise disruption at the beginning of the day, when children are late, parents must leave their children at the office; they must not accompany them to the classroom.

Persistent lateness will result in a letter from the Head Teacher and parents/carers may be invited to a meeting.

A class teacher who has any particular concerns about attendance or punctuality should refer the child to the Head Teacher. The Inclusion Service (formally Education Welfare) monitors registers on a termly basis.

Unplanned Absence from school

Parents are asked to inform the school of all absence on **each day** of absence by personal contact, letter, email or telephone. Notification of the nature of the illness and the expected length of absence is also expected. A record of absence messages are kept on the child's Arbor record.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence, Medical/ other appointments

For medical or other appointments during the school day notification is required **in advance**, where possible these should be arranged out of school hours. Appointment cards must be shown to the school.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. For medical or other appointments during the school day, notification is required in advance, but where possible these should be arranged out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Appointment cards or evidence must be shown to school.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Absence Procedures from School

The office will make contact with the parent/carer of any child who is not in school for whom we have not received an absence message for by 9.10am. A message reminder will be sent to the parent via text and email. This message will be re-sent until the parent contacts the school. The office will also continue to contact the parent/carer through a phone call, email and/or text message. The office will re-send this again if there is no response, and contact the other contacts we hold on record. This is recorded as unauthorised.

As part of our safeguarding practice, we may conduct a home visit, if we have not received any communication regarding the absence and/or we have endeavoured to make contact without success. Home visits are then recorded under our Safeguarding practices and the notes from the visit added to this record.

For persistent unauthorised absence a telephone call is made to the parent/carer on the first day of each non-attendance and recorded on the pupil file. If an explanation for absence is unsatisfactory parents will be contacted to discuss any difficulties with school attendance.

Non-collection of children at the end of the school day

1. Staff will take the child/children to the office and inform the office team.
2. Office team will contact parent, carers or emergency contacts.
3. Inform Headteacher &/DSL of the situation.
4. Make provision for them to go to Brambles and or a member staff stays with them depending on the circumstances.
5. If contact cannot be made with any of the child's contacts for 1 hour after school, Headteacher/DSL would contact social services.
6. If needed, the DSL/Headteacher/Deputy DSL would stay with the child in school until Social Services can provide a place of safety.
7. DSL/Deputy DSLs will follow recording procedures for a safeguarding concern.
8. If the child is under Social Care, we will notify the social worker assigned to the family.

Communication where attendance is a cause for concern

School will treat all pupils and parents with dignity and staff should model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, schools should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, and challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like.

Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school works with and supports the family and wherever possible the person should be kept consistent.

Parents are informed of their child's attendance during termly consultations and in the end of year report. in terms of percentage. Parents can login into their pupils Arbor profile to check their daily percentage. Attendance is colour coded as to whether this is:

- ❖ outstanding 99-100% (green with outstanding written),
- ❖ expected/good 96%-97% (green),
- ❖ 95% to 91%, cause for concern (yellow)
- ❖ below expectation (red)

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic school will draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, school will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and early support.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, we will facilitate all partners to work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this will include a meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may also include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions should be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

If attendance does not improve, parents are notified that any further absences for illness will be unauthorised without proof of medical evidence.

If a pupil's attendance is unsatisfactory, a letter is sent home highlighting their percentage and impact to education to parents. If attendance continues to fall, then proof of medical evidence, a meeting with the Headteacher and/or a meeting with Inclusion Officer will be arranged. If a child's attendance drops below 90%, the school will involve the Inclusion Officer (see below)

Requests for Leave of Absence during term time

Parents/carers are strongly discouraged from taking their children out of school during term time.

No holidays during term time will be authorised. The Head Teacher 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. Exceptional circumstances will be decided by the Head Teacher.

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 2025 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

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

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances must complete an application form and submit it to the Head Teacher. The forms are available from the school office. (See [Appendix 3](#))

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' such as a one-off special family celebration for example a wedding, or for attending a funeral. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

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.

We ask that any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance and the role of the Schools Attendance Service (SAS)

The Schools Attendance Service is part of the Local Education Authority which has responsibility for promoting and encouraging and enforcing regular school attendance. The school is assigned a specific SAS and they visit the school at least termly to note absence patterns and lateness and discuss any concerns. The school also is also supported by the service when concerns arise about attendance.

Monitoring/support

Children whose attendance is a concern will be referred to the SAS. The Attendance Officer and SAS work closely with these families developing relations and actions to improve their child's attendance. This is monitored and reviewed every half term.

Persistent Absence

For pupils who are persistently absent (at 90% or below), these attendances are tracked by the SAS and the school's persistent absence reported to the Local Governing Board Committee and the Trustees on a termly basis. Formal meetings are scheduled to discuss the barriers families may be experiencing and to set targets for improvement.

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 require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Sanctions

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 issues 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 10 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

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

The Surrey Attendance Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

2. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

4. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

1. If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be

charged at the flat rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, per parent/carer per child, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

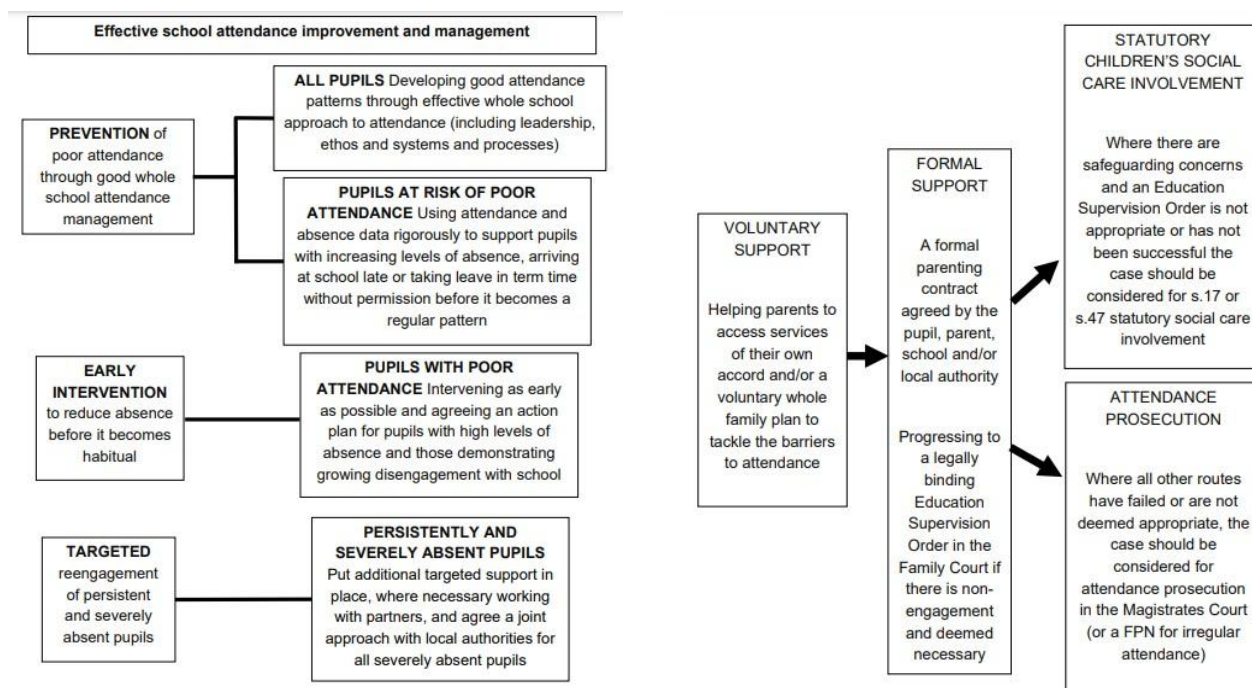
Notices to improve

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 doesn’t 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



Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

We understand that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. 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 they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with parents to improve attendance, school will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and we will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

This will/could include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed. Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, school should work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day. Please see further details on our SEN offer
- 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.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance. • Ensure data is regularly monitored for these groups 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.

Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. Please see further information on our Policy on Supporting Pupils With Medical Conditions at school.

We will in all cases, be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents and will talk to pupils and parents to understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

Please note that a part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore this will be treated as authorised absence.

Monitoring

The Headteacher and admin officer will analyse attendance data monthly or a minimum half termly looking at both percentages and patterns/trends to absence. Interventions and support will be put in place at all levels. These interventions will be monitored and the intervention adjusted if and where necessary.

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, and
- 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

The School will track attendance using Arbor, Insight, FFT and the [DFE Pupil attendance in schools portal](#)

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 severed absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers], to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, 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

Reporting

The Headteacher reports attendance data termly to the Local Governing Board Committee and the Trustees. This includes reporting on data for pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium Funding and SEND. Weekly attendance data is shared with stakeholders in the newsletter.

Sharing Information and working collaboratively with other schools/partners

We work with other local schools and partners to support parents overcome barriers. If we are not aware of a reason why a child does not attend school for 10 days, they will be reported as a Child Missing in Education.

PARENTS, please note that:

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- 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 them)

Appendix 1

All Pupils

Parents are expected to:	School is expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	School is expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child’s barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Work in collaboration with the school through the class teacher/AHT, in the first instance, to develop actions to overcome these barriers.</p> <p>Work towards targets set through written reminders.</p> <p>Consider voluntary referral to Early Help Assessment</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.</p> <p>Class teacher and AHT will continue to listen, understand and work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. They will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in the future.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, SLT/SENDCO signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, the school could provide additional support such as mentoring, home learning, additional tuition, or where appropriate an educational health care plan or alternative provision. They could also start to take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Headteacher, with attendance admin officer regularly review attendance data</p> <p>Attendance data is reported to governors at least termly who help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	School is expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, Headteacher/SLT to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers with the Attendance Officer/SLT/ and where necessary this includes working with partners e.g. Inclusion Officer.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future with the Inclusion Service/Social Care.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. If necessary, the IO will issue a fixed penalty notice and intensify support.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care. The Office notifies the Head Teacher of children whose absence is of extreme concern and the Headteacher/DSL will undertake a home visit and/or notify social care team. This activates when a pupils attendance drops below 50%. Social care to clarify to parents there is no improvement or engagement and all other routes are deemed not appropriate or have failed, the LA may choose to prosecute parents.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it. This is undertaken half termly and forms part of the Safeguarding Governor's discussions</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	School is expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract (in agreement with the child if older enough) or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p> <p>Work with the Education Supervision Order, if issued.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: Headteacher/SLT/Sendco agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority/IO (BELOW 50%)</p> <p>Formally explain the consequences of persistent absence and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future. Also use this meeting listen and understand the barriers to attendance and explain that help is available to avoid these consequences.</p> <p>Issue an Education Supervision Order or fixed Penalty Notice if disagreement continues. Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement if change is not evident.</p>	<p>As above: Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it through termly discussions with the Safeguarding Governor who focuses on attendance for whole school, PP and SEND.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p> <p>Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or deemed not appropriate or issue a community or parenting order. Where the parent is convicted, secure engagement with support.</p>

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	School is expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable.	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>The Headteacher analyses the whole school and class/year group data half termly through the MIS Arbor. Pupils, groups and cohorts are identified and targeted through class intervention during Pupil Progress Meetings.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.</p>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

Support for pupils with poor attendance due to medical conditions or SEND/ mental health difficulties such as anxiety

Parents are expected to:	School is expected to:	TLT and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>SENDCo to track SEND attendance half termly. Ensure pastoral support/mental health support/staggered starts/phased return are put in place where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals and working with other services to deliver support. Consider reasonable adjustments such as uniform, transport, routines, home learning, different entrances and lunchtime arrangements to support pupil needs.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

Summary of responsibilities The table pulls out from the [Working together to improve school attendance](#) expectations relating to social, emotional and mental health issues and attendance.

Parents are expected to:	School staff are expected to:	Academy Trusts and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Make sure their child attends school.</p> <p>Work with the school and other partner organisations such as the LA to establish a shared understanding of perceived barriers to attendance, with a view to supporting their child to maintain full-time attendance at school.</p> <p>Proactively engage with any support offered. Keep in touch with the school and be open in communicating information that will help improve the quality and nature of support being provided.</p> <p>Take action as best they can to support their child(ren) to recognise and manage their social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Support is available at Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters</p>	<p>Set and maintain high expectations for attendance for children with mental health concerns and work with pupils and parents/carers to maximise their attendance.</p> <p>Facilitate support for pupils experiencing mental health problems as well as for those experiencing normal but difficult emotions through sensitive conversations with pupils and parents/carers.</p> <p>Consider additional pastoral care inputs, where appropriate making referrals. Engage with parents at an early stage in conversations to support their child experiencing anxiety to ensure robust support for the child.</p> <p>Support parents if they feel the child needs to visit a specialist in relation to a mental health concern. There is no need to routinely ask for medical evidence to support recording an absence as authorised. Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours where possible. Only request medical evidence of a mental health-related absence where there is a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, whether the illness should constitute an absence or to inform any agreed actions to support attendance.</p>	<p>Regularly monitor and consider the approach to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing within the school to understand how it is working.</p> <p>Satisfy themselves that the building of emotional resilience is sufficiently delivered through school curriculum and pastoral support, promoting a strong ethos and culture.</p> <p>Support the school to take a holistic approach to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Work in conjunction with relevant services and partners such as local mental health services, and provide access to voluntary sector support and council services where necessary. Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of the school-age population.</p> <p>Work with partner organisations to signpost schools to support available in the local community and prioritise targeting support for children and young people most in need.</p> <p>Where support is provided but not engaged with voluntarily, consider whether to formalise support or to enforce attendance through legal intervention in the normal way under their existing powers.</p> <p>Determine whether alternative provision should be provided under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 as outlined in statutory guidance where pupils are likely to miss more than 15 days. Review EHC plans where required.</p>

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	School staff are expected to:	Academy Trusts and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are.</p> <p>Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort.</p> <p>Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p> <p>Headteacher/SLT/DSL informs the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p> <p>To report attendance through the DSL to Core Group meetings and Child Protection Conferences</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners, understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it.</p> <p>Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. • Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. <p>Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.</p>

Looked after and previously looked after children			
Parents are expected to:	School staff are expected to:	Academy Trusts and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked-after children that support good attendance.</p> <p>Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.</p>	<p>Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.</p>	<p>Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care.</p> <p>(LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school- whenever they live or are educated. • Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. • Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in

			<p>partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance.</p> <p>Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.</p>
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Monitoring

Parents	School	Academy Trusts and governing bodies	Local authorities
<p>Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.</p> <p>This is through Arbor's colour coded system and parent progress meetings</p>	<p>The Headteacher as the School's Attendance Champion, with the support of the Local Governing Body, will ensure all school based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures.</p> <p>The governing board or academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements.</p> <p>They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance.</p> <p>Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making.</p> <p>Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.</p> <p>Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND as part of the SEND Area Inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services.</p>

Appendix 2: Attendance Codes

Source: DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes – See appendix 4
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains

		open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 3

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, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. New regulations have come in to place in 19th August 2024 and as such our penalty notices have been updated.

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to back up your request.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice

Just to remind parents/carers that if they take their children out of school without authority for 5 or more days (which do not have to be consecutive), then the following will apply:

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children in a rolling 3 year period since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, per parent/carer per child, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

Surrey County Council is not responsible for authorising pupil absence and therefore cannot withdraw any Penalty Notice requests without the written permission of the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision. In the absence of a decision, parents/carers cannot assume that permission for the absence has been given. 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			
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 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
If YES, please give dates and details:			
I also have children at...			
Signed: (Parent/Carer)		Date:	
Address:			
Headteacher Approval: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Reason:			
Signed: (Headteacher)		Date:	

School information for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families

The travelling community has many different ethnic and cultural groups within it. The term 'Traveller' includes new travellers, Irish travellers, gypsies, fairground and circus travellers.

School attendance advice for children from travelling Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families

If a child has a good school attendance it improves their future life chances. Parents recognise this, but some Travellers may need to take their children out of school to travel for work purposes. The Education Act 1996 Section 444(6) recognises that children may be absent while parents are travelling for their trade or business. This applies to children who meet both the following criteria:

- Ascribed Gypsies (including Romanies, Romanichals, Welsh Gypsies/Kaale, Scottish Gypsies/Travellers)
- Irish Travellers, Minceir
- Roma from Eastern and Central Europe
- Showman/Show-woman/Circus, Occupational Travellers (WOTH)
- Circus people
- Boat Travellers/Bargees
- New Travellers or New Age Travellers
- The parent/carer is in a trade or business of such a nature that requires them to travel from place to place. (Education Act 1996 Section 444(6))

Traveller ethnicity and ascription

What is ascription?

By law, schools are required to collect information about pupils' ethnic backgrounds. When your child starts school, you will be asked to ascribe. You can choose which ethnic group your family belongs to.

Ethnicity is a personal awareness of a common cultural identity and relates to how a person feels and not how they are perceived by others. It is not the same as nationality.

Travellers with a Fairground/Showman/Circus heritage (who travel for purposes of their occupation) may not be Gypsy/Roma or Traveller of Irish Heritage and may ascribe as White British. If a pupil is from an Occupational Traveller family, parents can give permission for the school to complete the Traveller Status field by selecting Occupational Traveller.

Which code should I use?

- WROM: Gypsy/Roma
- WROG: Gypsy
- WROR: Roma

- WROO: Other Gypsy/Roma
- WIRT: Traveller or Irish Heritage
- WBRI or WOTH: Fairground/Showman/Show-woman/Circus (write "Showman" on the form)

Benefits of ascription:

- Schools can use the 'T code' to authorise absences when travelling for work purposes
- You can dual register your child or children
- Schools can access additional support from Race Equality and Minority Achievement (REMA).

Authorising absence for travelling for work purposes

When deciding whether to authorise a child's absence from school, a Headteacher considers if:

- The child has good attendance when not travelling
- The child has been in school for at least 100 days (200 sessions) in the 12 months before their expected return date (Education Act 1996 Section 444(6))
- Parents have completed a leave of absence request form before the period of travel for work. It is helpful to show they are travelling for work purposes
- Parents have given the school a date when they expect the child will return to school. If this changes they will need to let the school know along with the reasons why
- Do the parents intend to dual register their child whilst away? Is distance learning possible?

Frequently asked questions

Can I take my child out of school to visit relatives, attend weddings, funerals or go on holiday?

The Headteacher can only authorise this in exceptional circumstances.

I don't know when I will be back so I cannot give a return date.

Choose a realistic date and stay in touch with school while you are away and tell them if your plans change. Call the school to tell them of any changes to your travel plans or your child could lose their school place.

What happens if I go away without following this advice?

If you go travelling and have not spoken to the Headteacher, you could lose your school place after 20 days or get a fine.

If you need further advice please speak to your child's school, college or early years setting or email rema@surreycc.gov.uk.