

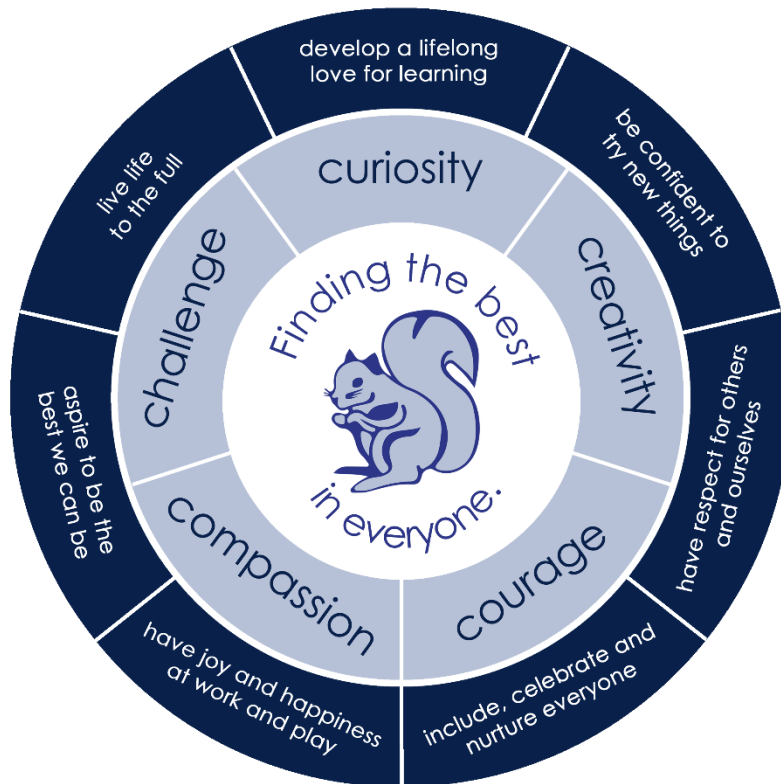


Felbridge Primary School

Finding the best in everyone.

Attendance Policy

Autumn 2024



This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Revised/Written by:	HHF
Presented to Governing Body	Summer 2024
Date for Review (3 year) <i>*unless DfE/LA guidance necessitates changes</i>	Summer 2027
Status	Recommended/non statutory

Felbridge Primary School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

All staff and governors at Felbridge Primary School firmly believe that regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Together, we take seriously our responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all pupils and believe that improving attendance for all is everyone's responsibility.

Irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning and undermines educational progress, not only for the child who is absent but also for the rest of the class. It can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school. It is vital that children feel their presence in school is important and that they are missed when absent or late.

Felbridge Primary School expects children to attend school every day and on time, unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf. To this end we will do all 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.

We believe that happy children wish to come to school and do all that we can to make the school day a positive experience. 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. The foundation of securing good attendance is that our school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.¹

Aims

- To maximise the attendance of all pupils in line with [Government policy](#) and guidance.
- To provide a positive and welcoming environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- To monitor and support pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with children, parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.
- To work closely with and make full use of support from the wider community including the Local Authority Inclusion Service and multi-agency teams.

The importance of regular attendance

Education ensures that children have the best start in life, that they are equipped for succeeding both academically and socially so that they can achieve in their exams and, later, chosen careers or life path, and manage relationships. Children who miss school are more likely to become victims or perpetrators of crime. The more school children miss the harder it is to catch up. Statistics show that 90% of persistent absentees (those with attendance below 90%) fail to achieve 5 or more good GCSE grades or equivalent. Poor examination results limit young people's options. Good school outcomes at secondary school may be the passport into higher education and better jobs, but the process of developing good attendance habits starts with us at primary school.

Statistics provided for the Department for Education's attendance guidance state: *at Key Stage 2, 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*

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> Para 7

pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%).²

Parental responsibility and the law

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives education either by attendance at a school, or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice.

Administration and Registers

- The school is open for 380 sessions (190 days) during a school year. Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register for every session.
- The school uses Attendance Manager provided by SIMS to store and monitor data in order to carry out its legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.
- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. These are taken by teachers using the SIMS register facility. Registers must be completed carefully and accurately.

Absence

Lateness

- It is expected that children will arrive at school on time. The gates open at 8.40am and the school day begins with registration at 8.50am for all children.
- Pupils arriving after the register has formally closed (9.20 am) will be considered as unauthorised late (marked in the register with a code U) unless a reason has been provided by parents. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken in the classroom but before it has been formally closed will be marked as late with a code 'L'.
- Pupils arriving after 8.50am must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded.
- If a child is repeatedly late for school parents will be contacted to remind them of their responsibilities and a letter may be sent. If the lateness continues, the matter will be referred to the Surrey Inclusion Service for further action.

Illness

- As part of the Home School Agreement, parents/carers are asked to contact school before 9.30am on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and the approximate day a child is likely to return to school. This may be via phone call (voicemails can be left if before office hours) to 01342 323413 or email to info@felbridge.surrey.sch.uk. Where possible contact should also be made on subsequent days of illness unless a need for absence has already been agreed (e.g. for the 48 hour rule for sickness/diarrhoea). If requested, parents/carers should provide a written explanation on their child's return to school. This may be by email.
- Where Office Staff are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence they will, wherever possible, contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence.
If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Headteacher should be informed.

As part of our safeguarding practice, we may contact one or more of the additional contacts on the child's contact list in SIMS. We may also conduct a home visit if we have not received any

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> Para 11

communication regarding the absence and/or we have endeavoured to make contact without success. Home visits are recorded under our Safeguarding practices and the notes from the visit added to this record.

Medical or Dental Appointments

- Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours where possible.
- Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments.

Requests for leave of absence

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

Appendix A below details current requirements and penalties.

Parents or carers should plan their holidays around school holidays and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time, unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

If there are exceptional circumstances, then a request can be made to the school using our absence request form, which can be found in Appendix B below and on our website.

Requests for term-time absences should be made as soon as possible and at least 5 days before the absence is due to take place. However, we recognise that in some rare instances particularly those involving serious accident or illness this will not always be possible.

Requests for term-time absences will be considered on a case-by-case basis taking the facts, circumstances and any supporting evidence into consideration.

Other absence from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made to authorise or unauthorise the absence. Examples of absences that may be authorised might include days that are exclusively set aside for religious observance in a particular faith, or for participation in sporting or drama events such as filming, pantomime, television or as a child member of a professional theatre cast. As with holidays, an absence form should be completed and given to the office. Exceptions also apply for Traveller families where they are known to be travelling for occupational purposes (see below).

All requests for leave will be considered on a case by case basis by the Headteacher (or a member of the Leadership Team in their absence) who has delegated responsibility from the Governing Body to make fair and appropriate decisions. NAHT Guidance on authorised absence in schools (October 2014, available from the website) will be used to inform these decisions. (available alongside this policy from our website). The decision of the Governing Body will be final.

Local Authority attendance advice for children from travelling Gypsy, Roma & Traveller families³

The legislation (*Education Act 1996 Section 444(6)*) regarding school attendance recognises that some parents may need to take their children out of school in order to travel for work purposes. and provides protection from unreasonable prosecution if children are absent whilst parents are travelling for their trade or business. This applies to children who meet both the following criteria:

³ <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/at-school/extra-support-for-your-child/roma/support-for-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-children-and-young-people>

Children are from one of the following groups:

Ascribed Gypsies (inc. Romanies, Romanichals, Welsh Gypsies/Kale, Scottish Gypsies/Travellers), Irish Travellers, Minceir, Roma from Eastern and Central Europe, Occupational Travellers (Showmen/Fairground), Circus people, Boat Travellers/Bargees, New Travellers or New Age Travellers

AND

The parent/carer is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature that requires them to travel from place to place.

(Education Act 1996 Section 444(6))

Consideration will be given to the following for children who meet the above criteria when authorisation decisions are made:

- The child attends regularly when not travelling
- The child has been in school for at least 100 days (200 sessions) in the 12 month period prior to their expected return date from travelling (*Education Act 1996 Section 444(6)*)
- Parents have completed a leave of absence request form before the period of travel for work. Being able to show evidence that the travel is for work purposes is recommended.
- 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. Parents and school should keep in contact by phone.
- Parents are advised to consider whether dual registering or distance learning provision could be arranged.

Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school (full details of this process are contained in the Behaviour Policy), parents have a duty to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice issued by the Inclusion Service.

Communication and reporting to parents

All absences both authorised, unauthorised and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of the academic year as part of their child's annual report, alongside the school's annual target for attendance. In addition, attendance certificates are sent home midway through the year to support parents with understanding their child's attendance needs. *Future updates to school management systems will enable parents to view their child's attendance at any point during the year.*

Frequent absence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school or there can be another barrier to learning or attendance. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out in partnership between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful for parents/carers to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic, we will draw on our relationships with families 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 support partners to work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. This may include some or all of the following actions:

- a meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school;
- agreeing actions or interventions to address them;
- 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 to parents highlighting their child's attendance percentage and the impact to their education. If attendance continues to fall, then a meeting with the Headteacher and/or a meeting with the Local Authority Inclusion Officer (the IO) will be arranged.

The Inclusion Service is part of the Local Authority which has responsibility for promoting, encouraging and enforcing regular school attendance. The IO visits the school to note absence patterns and lateness. Children whose attendance is a concern will be referred to the IO. The designated member of staff for attendance and the IO 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 (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% (38 or more sessions) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Any absence has an impact on a child's educational achievement; we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The Department for Education (DfE) and the Local Authority monitor the levels of PA children and levels of absence in all schools.

Attendance of all pupils is tracked and monitored carefully and we also combine this with academic monitoring because absence affects attainment.

Parents/carers will be informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance.

Unauthorised absence may result in legal action being taken against each parent- see Appendix A for details of Penalty Notices.

Please note that the school receives no monies from Penalty Notices.

Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality

- Class teachers will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that all pupils feel that they can succeed.
- Individual pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal attendance goals.
- Positive reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from school for a period of time and a plan developed to help them catch up with any missed curriculum and promote future attendance.
- Good attendance, whether individual or as a class, may be celebrated through various means, including certificates, the newsletter or Celebration Assemblies.
- The weekly attendance for each class is published in the newsletter after children have been shown it in Celebration Assembly. Any trends may also be highlighted if desired.
- A small reward (such as some extra break time) may be given to classes for either consistently good attendance, or an improvement in attendance over time. A larger reward may also be given to the class with the highest attendance over a longer period, such as a non-uniform day for the class.

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.
- 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. <https://www.felbridgeprimary.com/policies/>

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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Attendance data will be collected monthly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with:
 - Incomplete weeks
 - Monday and/or Friday absences
 - Lateness
 - Periods of extended absence
 - Periods of unauthorised absence
 - All children with attendance below 90%

This data will be discussed by senior leaders and/or the designated member of staff with the Inclusion Officer as part of their regular meetings.

- The designated member of staff and the Inclusion Officer will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually and the Headteacher will recommend an attendance target to the Governors.
- Termly Headteacher reports to the governors include attendance data by year group and for the whole school.
- The Governors will set an annual target of attendance and review this annually.

Roles And Responsibilities

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers should also support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education and the positive effect it brings to them, both now and in the future.

As such, there are key expectations/responsibilities for certain people and groups:

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school every day;
- attend school on time;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day;
- discuss promptly with their class teacher any problems that deter them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day-to-day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- ensure that they contact the school **every day** by 9.30 am whenever the child is unable to attend school;
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school;
- ensure the school has up to date telephone numbers for family and nominated contacts.

Through the following roles:

- Governors- working with leaders to establish policies, procedures and expectations and monitoring/challenging the implementation and success thereof;
- Co-headteachers- taking responsibility for implementing policy/procedure, monitoring attendance and absence and the impact of policy/procedure;
- The Designated Senior Leader for Attendance- overseeing attendance issues, having a clear vision and expectations, arranging meetings and support for families to address issues;
- Attendance/Admin Staff- monitoring day-to-day individual and group attendance, gathering data and producing reports, working with the Inclusion Service and liaising with other external services as needed;
- Class Teachers/staff team- providing a safe, stimulating and encouraging environment, completing accurate attendance registers and working with all stakeholders to support the addressing of barriers where they exist.

we expect that the school will:

- Set and maintain high expectations for attendance for children with mental health concerns and work with pupils and parents/carers to maximise their attendance.
- 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. 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.
- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor every pupil's attendance (see administration above);
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain reasons for absence. The absence will then be considered for authorisation;
- encourage good attendance;
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children;
- provide a safe learning environment;
- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's or families' concerns;
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service;
- meet the rights of the child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them as appropriate.

Note- the school follows Surrey County Council procedures and policies regarding Children Missing Education (CME) whether in the long term or during the school day. The Surrey policy for CME, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding between Surrey Police and Surrey schools regarding CME, are both available on our website in the policies section: <https://www.felbridgeprimary.com/policies/>

Appendix A

Penalty Notice Guidance for Parents

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 Notice 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.

Advice and support is available from an Attendance Advice Officer by contacting the Attendance Service. The local office for South-East Surrey can be reached at 01737 737777.

Further details can be found at: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/at-school/attendance-and-absence>

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.



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.
- Absences in term time will affect your child’s schooling. There is a clear link between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so will performance and achievement.
- Please complete and submit this form at least 2 weeks prior to the requested date of leave 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 validate your request.

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

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this 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

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>I am applying for leave of absence for my child for</i>			
From:		To:	
Number of school days:			
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:			
Evidence for request attached? (e.g. if for hospital/filming/performance etc)		Yes	No
Has your child already had a leave of absence in this school year?		Yes	No
If YES, please give dates and details:			
If you have children at another school, please provide the name of the school(s):			
Parent/carer’s full name:			
Signed: (parent/carer)		Date:	

To be completed by the Headteacher or, in their absence, the Deputy Headteacher

Having considered your request carefully, the decision is that leave of absence is:

Approved		The absence will be recorded as <u>authorised</u> .
Not approved		The absence will be recorded as <u>unauthorised</u> . <i>Please note guidance on implications for unauthorised absence.</i>

Explanatory notes (if relevant):

Signed: _____ (Headteacher) Date: _____

School Office Use	Current attendance for this academic year:
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