



NESSSS

NORTH EAST SURREY
SHORT STAY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

2025-2026

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1. Aims

For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that students attend school regularly and are on time for school.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regard to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education, to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. (Section 444 of the 1986 Education Act)

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements for [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). These are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and suits that govern school attendance.

- [The Education Act 1996](#) - Part 6
- [The Education Act 2002](#) - Part 3
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) - Part 7
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulation 2007](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Management Committee

The Management Committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence and data and reporting it to the Management Committee
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Inclusion Manager

The Inclusion manager is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance data across the school and the school centres at an individual pupil level
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Working with Surrey Attendance Service to tackle persistent absence
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Attendance Administration

Administration assistants are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the Inclusion Manager and the Headteacher.

3.5 School Staff

Administration assistants are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register as pupils arrive at the school each school day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site education 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 the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by **08:45** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **09:00** and will be kept open until **09:30**. The register for the second session will be taken at **12:00** and will be kept open until **12:30**.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school on the first day of any unplanned absence by **08:45** or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

To notify the school of the pupil's absence the parent/carers must telephone the site that the child normally attends.

NESSSS Hersham 01932 229 369

NESSSS Staines 01784 464416

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

To notify the school of the pupil's medical or dental appointment the parent/carer must telephone the site that the child normally attends.

NESSSS Hersham 01932 229 369

NESSSS Staines 01784 464416

If the authenticity of the appointment is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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.

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

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Once the registers are closed, then telephone calls are made to any parent/carers whose child is absent and no communication has been received as to why the pupil is absent. Comments are recorded on SIMS.

4.5 Following up Absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carers to ascertain the reason. The Administration Assistant or Inclusion Team will contact them to discuss the reasons. The communication will be recorded on the school's management information system.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/carers are informed of their child's attendance at review meetings and in reports. Parents of pupils whose absence is a concern will be invited in for an attendance meeting to discuss why the absences are occurring and if the school can provide any further support.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-Time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances', a leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as events or problems which you did not expect and which stop you being able to perform to the best of your abilities in your studies. For example, bereavement, unexpected personal or family problems or illness.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absences** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see section [4.2](#) and [4.3](#) for more details)
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes - this covers Roma, English, Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus People, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Death of a family member
- Hospitalisation
- Study-leave, this is not granted by default and is only granted to pupils who are in year 11. Provision will be made by pupils who wish to revise in school
- Flexi schooling is used by NESSSS when there is clear evidence that the pupil cannot cope with a full school day. Surrey Attendance Service are made aware and the intention is to increase the time back to full time education within an agreed time frame.

5.2 Reducing Persistent Absence

Escalation Process

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to notify the school on each day of absence. Parents/carers must make contact by 08:45 of that day. However, if the child is absent and no reason has been provided, the following procedure will apply:

First Day Absence

The school will telephone the parent/carer to request a reason for absence. School will record on Arbor, any reason given for the absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. A message will be left where no contact can be made. SLT will be informed.

Second Day of Absence

The school will telephone the parent/carer to request a reason for absence. School will record on Arbor any reason given for the absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. A message will be left where no contact can be made. SLT and Surrey Attendance Service will be informed.

Third Day of Absence

The school will telephone the parent/carer to request a reason for absence. School will record on Arbor any reason given for the absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. If no response is received the school will send a letter. SLT and Surrey Attendance Service will be informed.

Absences of five days or more may need to be accompanied by medical evidence showing the child was unable to attend school for that period.

Ten Days Absence

Any pupil who is absent, without explanation for ten or more consecutive days will be reported to the Local Authority by submitting a referral to Surrey Attendance Service. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Where a child is absent from school the following procedures will be followed for welcoming them back: If they've been off for one day, the tutor and the Pastoral Care Team welcomes them back and checks they are ok. If they are off for a few days, further communication from the tutor will be made and provision made for the pupil to catch up with work.

For longer term absences a meeting with the Pastoral Care Team will take place and a more formal reintegration implemented with a plan to catch up. Extra sessions may be offered for support.

5.3 Legal Sanctions

The school or Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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.

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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

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/carers 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/carers 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/carers 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/carers per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

NESSSS reward good attendance by issuing attendance certificates and vouchers to pupils.

NESSSS has extra-curricular trips which pupils can go on if they have achieved their attendance target.

Parents are contacted early about attendance concerns and invited in to discuss what help and support can be provided. Letters are sent out to parents whose children have had attendance rates of 95% plus for a half term. Expected attendance (100%) is discussed at admission meetings.

7. Attendance Monitoring

The Inclusion Manager monitors attendance on a weekly basis.

A pupil's parent/carers is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section [4.2](#)).

The pupil's parent/carers is expected to call the school each day their child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer to discuss the reasons for this.

If the absence continues to rise after their parent/carer, we will consider involving Surrey Attendance Service.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence 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 national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Management Committee.

Attendance data is recorded on Arbor and it is used to monitor and track attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children who absence may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance for the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Management Committee.

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1

School Attendance Codes 2024

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absence	
G	holiday (not agreed)

N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)