



30 September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

School Attendance - New Regulations - Fixed Penalty Notices

I am writing to inform you that the legal framework around children's attendance at school has changed. New government regulations came into effect on 19 August 2024, which affect Fixed Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised absence (including unauthorised holiday) and schools are required to bring the following information to the attention of all Parents and Carers.

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school (absence without the agreement of the school or not covered by a medical note) and will be used by Surrey County Council in the following circumstances:

1. Pupils identified by Police and Attendance Advice Officers (formerly Education Welfare Officers) engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. Leave of absence in term time (5 days or 10 sessions or more) and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1 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.

In such cases the Headteacher must decide whether there are exceptional circumstances. They may request that Surrey County Council Issue Penalty Notices when the absence is not authorised.

Warnings will not be given where it can be shown that Parents/Carers have been notified that such absences will not be authorised. Each Parent/Carer is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent.

3. Finally, the issuing of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where it is judged that a Parent/Carer is failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be issued where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks, which may include a child arriving late after close of registration.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you act without delay to secure their regular attendance.

If you have any questions or require further support to achieve an improvement in your child's attendance, please contact your child's class teacher.

If you'd like further information, please read our Attendance Policy [here](#)

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Kathryn Dray
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