

# Attendance Policy

The Mead Infant School and Auriol Junior School



<b>Approved by:</b>	James Knights & Tracy Creasey	<b>Date:</b> 18/09/2025
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	September 2025	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	September 2026	

## Contents

1. Aims .....	2
2. Legislation and guidance .....	2
3. Roles and responsibilities .....	3
4. Recording attendance .....	5
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence .....	8
6. Strategies for promoting attendance .....	9
7. Attendance monitoring .....	9
8. Monitoring arrangements .....	11
Appendix 1: attendance codes .....	11
Appendix 2: penalty notices.....	15

### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The Governing board

The Governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding 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 data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

At Auriol, the designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ellie Wilson and can be contacted via [WilsonEll@auriol.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:WilsonEll@auriol.surrey.sch.uk).

At The Mead, the designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Tracy Creasey and can be contacted via [head@mead.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:head@mead.surrey.sch.uk).

### 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with Inclusion Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher and designated senior leader responsible for attendance (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer at Auriol is Mei Yam Hui.

The attendance officer at The Mead is Emma Morgan.

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9:00am for morning registration and 1:15pm for afternoon registration
- Raising initial concerns regarding attendance directly with parents

### **3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Follow up with a phone call or email if a parent has not contacted the school to inform us of their child's absence. Inform a DSL if contact can not be made with the family.
- Transfer calls from parents to the designated senior leader and class teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance
- If absence becomes a concern, work with the school to understand any barriers to attendance and proactively engage with the support offered

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## 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 at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark 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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

#### **Auriol Junior School**

At Auriol, pupils must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day (gates will be open from 8:30am).

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40am and pupils arriving after this time must sign in at the school office. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm.

#### **The Mead Infant School**

At The Mead, pupils must arrive by the following times on each school day

Year 1 and 2 8.30am (register 8.35)

Reception 8.40am (register 8.50)

Nursery 9.00 am (register 9.00)

Pupils arriving after this time must sign in at the school office.

The register for the second session will be taken at the following times:

Nursery: 12.00

Reception: 11.35

Year 1 and 2: 1.15

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling or emailing the school office staff on [info@auriol.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:info@auriol.surrey.sch.uk) or [attendance@mead.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@mead.surrey.sch.uk) (see also section 7).

Parents should leave a message or details including their child's name, class and reason for absence.

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 providing the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, 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 the school can authorise.

#### **Auriol Junior School**

For all known periods of absence, parents should request this using the 'Leave of Absence request form' which can be found on the school website within the 'Parents' tab or by requesting this directly from the school office.

#### **The Mead Infant School**

For all known periods of absence, parents should request this using the 'Leave of Absence request form' which can be found on the school website within the "Attendance" tab in "School Information" or by requesting this directly from the school office.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

Any child arriving after the doors have closed in both schools should be taken to the school office. Parents/carers will be asked to sign their child in giving a brief description of the reason for their child's lateness.

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 Auriol registers close at 8:55am and The Mead registers close at:

Nursery	9.15am
Reception	9.05am
Year 1 & 2	9.15am

Where the school has a concern around the number of late marks for a pupil, parents/carers will be contacted directly by the child's class teacher, school attendance officer and/or designated senior leader.

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the parent/carer or the other emergency contacts held by the school until a response is obtained and staff know that the child is safe, if no telephone call or email is received from the parent/carer by 9:00
- If there is no response from any of the contacts held by the school, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be informed and where the pupil has been identified as vulnerable, this will result in external agencies being contacted or a home visit to ascertain that the child is safe
- If there is no response from a home visit, all efforts will be made to establish the safety and well-being of the child/ren. This may involve working with other agencies e.g. children services and the police
- For any child whose family are known, by the school, to be currently working in partnership with Children's Services an additional phone call to the named Social Worker/Family Support Worker will also be made. Equally, for any children where the school has significant concerns that are not currently working in partnership with Children's Services, an additional phone call into CSPAR may be made. The school may also seek further advice from the Inclusion Service (IS) and/or any other professional service it feels is appropriate.

For all other pupils, appropriate and proportionate measures will be taken each day until absence is explained.

The school will:

- Identify whether the absence is approved
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will inform all parents about their child's attendance and absence levels every term. Attendance will be shared during autumn and spring parents evening and within the summer written report.

Where there are concerns from the school regarding a child's attendance, the school attendance policy will be followed, and further direct communication will be made with parents/carers. Initial concerns will be raised by the class teacher, if there is no improvement a letter of concern will be sent, followed by a meeting and further evidence required for absences if there is no improvement. If appropriate the school may involve the local authority.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. 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' as one-off events which are unavoidable.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least one week before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website within the parents tab or directly from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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 parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and 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
- Entrance exams will be authorised for the half day (AM or PM) during which the exam falls, up to a maximum of 3 sessions, including sitting of the 11+ exam. Any further absence relating to an entrance exam will be recorded as unauthorised. This includes any absence on the same day, directly before or after an exam, and additional days around the exam.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of immediate family.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

### 5.2 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.

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. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance of all pupils is regularly monitored and those requiring additional support due to persistent absence concerns will be directly contacted in accordance with this policy. Individual supportive measures are put in place where required with parents, pupils and school staff working together to improve areas of concern.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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 the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

If a pupil is persistently late, direct contact will be made by the child's class teacher, designated senior leader and/or attendance officer to ensure that parents/carers are aware of lateness and support is provided where necessary

Where persistent absence occurs (a child's attendance falls below 90%) the following stages of communication will follow:

- 1) In the first instance, the class teacher will contact parents/carers through parents evenings or via other communication
- 2) If attendance does not improve, a stage one persistent absence letter will be sent directly to the parents/carers informing them of their child's current attendance and that the school will continue to monitor attendance
- 3) Where absence persistently remains below 90% the following half term, a stage two letter will be sent directly to parents/carers. Within this letter, parents/carers will either be notified of the school's continual monitoring, or they will be invited to a meeting between parents/carers, the

child's class teacher and designated senior leader. Within this meeting, all parties will agree priority targets and a review date.

- 4) If no improvement is made, a stage three letter will be sent directly to parents/carers requesting all future absences to be justified with medical evidence. The external school inclusion officer will be directly informed and invited to provide support.
- 5) If there is still no improvement there will be referral to the local authority inclusion team

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum of three years by the designated senior leader and attendance officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting children with health needs who cannot attend school
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity. The B code cannot be used for pupils who are receiving online learning within the home.
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>C1*</b>	Leave of absence for a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.	Authorised absence

<b>C2*</b>	Leave of absence for a child on a part-time timetable.	Authorised absence. Part time timetables should only be used as a temporary measure, parental consent is required. The timetable should be frequently reviewed. Unauthorised sessions should be recorded if the child fails to attend expected sessions.
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days more than agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.	Approved Education Activity
<b>K*</b>	Alternative provision arranged by the Local Authority to ensure Section 19 duties met.	Approved alternative provider.
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence

<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>Q*</b>	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements	Authorised absence.
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced and partial enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y1*</b>	Normal transport arrangements unavailable	Not counted in possible attendances

<b>Y2*</b>	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y3*</b>	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y4*</b>	Unable to attend due to whole school unexpectedly being closed	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y5*</b>	Unable to attend due to being criminally detained.	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y6*</b>	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance, or law	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y7*</b>	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## Appendix 2

### 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/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.