



Meadowcroft Community Primary School • Little Green Lane • Chertsey • KT16 9PT  
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4 October 2024

Dear Parents

### **Attendance 2024**

During the summer holiday, the Department for Education (DfE) issued guidance for schools, academy trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities on maintaining high levels of school attendance.

Maintaining good attendance is **crucial** for students' learning and success!

What YOU must do:

- Telephone the school before 9.00am each day of your child's absence.
- Tell the school in advance, of any medical appointments and bring in appointment cards/letters.
- If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, send them in anyway as they often perk up on arrival. If you have given consent we can administer Calpol and anti-histamine.
- Have a backup plan for if your child misses transport, call on a family member, neighbour or friend.
- If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance then talk to us as a first step so we can help!

What WE will do:

- Check your child's attendance every day.
- Phone home to discuss your child's attendance with you.
- Invite you into school for attendance meetings if we are concerned.
- If we cannot establish a reason for absence, then we may make a welfare home visit.

**ALL** absence requests must be made in writing via the Absence Request Form, available from the Office or via the school website. All requests must be at least 2 weeks in advance of requested leave. ***Persistent absence and periods of unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice.***

### **Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School**

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).

- **Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 01 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/Governing Body 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 have been notified that such absences will not be authorised.

3. Finally, the issuing of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where it is judged that a parent is failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance.

This will be considered when a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions in the previous 10 school weeks, which may include a pupil 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 school or the Attendance Advice Officer.

### **Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions**

If a child is excluded from school, Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours.

This duty applies to the ***first five days of each exclusion***. Failure to do so will render the parent/carer liable to a Penalty Notice. (Alternative education provision will be made available from the sixth day of any exclusion.)

### **Amount Payable for a Penalty Notice and Consequences for repeat unauthorised absences**

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.

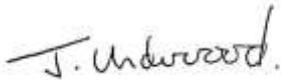
**Surrey County Council is not responsible for authorising pupil absence and therefore cannot withdraw any Penalty Notice requests without the written permission of the Headteacher.**

Advice and support is available from an Attendance Advice Officer by contacting Surrey Attendance Service as follows :-

North West Surrey - Tel: 01483 518130

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact myself, Mrs Moon or Mrs Curling.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Underwood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Mrs J Underwood  
Head Teacher