



ATTENDANCE, LEAVE OF ABSENCE and LATENESS POLICY

Agreed: Autumn 2022
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Attendance

The staff and governors at Valley End School encourage and expect pupils to attend school. Regular attendance is linked to high standards of pupil achievement and progress. Children quickly pick up the message that their presence is important. The staff and governors at Valley End C of E Infant School believe that in order to meet the aims and objectives of the school that all children should attend during the 190 days during term time so that effective teaching and learning can take place.

Registers provide a daily record of the attendance of all pupils and are regularly audited by Surrey County Council's Inclusion Team. Registers are documents that may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. Information from registers also contributes to pupils' end of term reports and records of achievement, which transfer with the child throughout their educational career. Records of absence are kept for each child.

Leave of absence

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only does the child miss the teaching provided on the days they are absent, they are also less prepared for the lessons after they return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which the school and the parents/carers should seek to avoid.

- Parents/carers are advised against booking any holidays during term time as they will not be authorised. School holiday dates are published a year in advance and are available on the school and Surrey County Council websites.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and may consult with the Chair of Governors before granting leave.
- Any exceptional circumstance where a pupil may need to be absent for a long period must be discussed with the Headteacher and where possible, the discussion should take place no less than three weeks prior to the anticipated leave.
- All absences, authorised and unauthorised, of 10 days or more will be reported to the Local Authority and Surrey County Council's Inclusion Team.
- When authorisation of absence is refused, the parent/carer will be informed in writing.
- Pupils may be removed from the school roll if they do not return after an agreed date and the absence is longer than 10 days.

To notify the school that children may be taken out during term time, parents/carers will be asked to request and complete an absence form and return it to the Headteacher **no less than two weeks prior** to the absence.

When appropriate, parents and carers will be reminded of the importance of good attendance. Governors will receive termly reports about absence and the effect of absence on pupil progress. Teachers will not provide homework for children during family holidays taken during term time. Copies of all request forms are kept in the children's record of achievement files that transfer with them throughout their educational career as a legal requirement.

Penalty notices

Penalty notices will be issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised holidays in term time.

The penalty notice fines are as follows:

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is **£60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice, rising to £120 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days**. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or equivalent will result in the Headteacher requesting that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices may also be issued when a pupil is stopped by Truancy Patrol or at the discretion of the Education Welfare Officer if a parent / carer fail to ensure regular school attendance.

Lateness

School begins at 8.55am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Any pupil arriving later than 8.55am should enter the school via the Cottage Door and report to the office. A parent/carer should give a reason for the lateness and if the register has not yet returned from the class, the pupil will be registered. If the register has returned from the class, the pupil will be marked as late and the parent/carer will be asked to sign in with the actual time of arrival.

Parents who are consistently late in bringing their children to school are disrupting not only their own child's education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, further action may be taken:

- The school may refer to the Inclusion Service.
- The parent/carer may contact the Inclusion Officer who will work with the parent/carer and the school to resolve the situation. The telephone number is available in the school office and on the school website.

Absence through illness

When a pupil is absent for any unforeseeable reason, the pupil's parents/carer should contact the school on the first day stating the reason for non-attendance. If there is no contact from the pupil's parents/carer on the first day, the school will make contact by telephone by 9.30am. If there is still no contact, the school will call the police and ask for a home visit to ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil(s).

A note explaining the absence must be sent to the pupil's class teacher by the parent /carer when the pupil returns to school.

Any child who is ill with a high temperature, vomiting, diarrhoea or an infection MUST NOT attend school for at least 48 hours until there is no longer any high temperature, vomiting or diarrhoea. If a child is showing any Covid-19 symptoms – i.e. a high temperature, a new consistent cough or loss of smell or taste, they are advised to test for Coronavirus before they return to school. If the child tests positive for Covid-19, they should follow the most recent government guidance on isolation and contact with others.

Doctor/Dentist/hospital appointments

Parents/ carers are asked where possible to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Any absence due to doctor's, hospital or dentist's appointments for part or whole days, must be given in writing by the parent(s)/guardian so that the school always knows where the child is for security and safeguarding reasons. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

Truancy Patrol

When a pupil comes to the attention of the Truancy Patrol, the pupil's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to parents /carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent/carer.

Surrey County Council's Inclusion Team

The school's Inclusion Officer monitors the attendance of all pupils on a regular basis. They will work with the school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by the school, then the school will make a referral to the Inclusion Team. The Inclusion Team will try to resolve a situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed, and unauthorised absence persists, the Inclusion Team can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, Penalty Notices and prosecution.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school, the Headteacher of is informed as soon as possible. The pupil will not be removed from the school roll until notification of their start date has been confirmed by the receiving school.

An in-year transfer form is available to download from the Surrey County Council Website or school website and should be completed by the parent and Headteacher prior to transfer. Pupils' school records are sent to the new school. If they fail to attend on the anticipated start date the family will be referred to the local authority tracking officer.

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

The legislation requires that all children, from babies until they cease to be of compulsory school age, be licensed by the local authority in which they live, when they take part in a performance on stage or in a broadcast.

A child remains subject to these regulations until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they turn 16. The academic year runs from 1 September – 31 August inclusive.

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able sports players can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Links to other policies:

Supporting children with medical needs

Equalities

Safeguarding and child protection

Special Educational Needs and disabilities