



**Prior Heath Infant School**  
Prior Road, Camberley, Surrey GU15 1DA  
Tel: 01276 25546  
Email: [info@prior-heath.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:info@prior-heath.surrey.sch.uk)

Headteacher: Mrs Lindsey Chivers

6<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Dear Parents,

### **School Attendance**

The school staff, alongside the Local Authority and Department for Education, strongly believe that in order for children to fulfil their potential, they need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. To this end, we will do all we can to encourage parents to ensure that the children in their care achieve our expectation of 100% attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon promptly. Please note that school attendance is monitored by the Local Authority and the Department for Education and children's attendance records are passed on to their next school.

Our Inclusion Officer, Rachel Young, meets with me every term to evaluate our attendance figures and, if any children have poor attendance, may invite their parents to a meeting. Following Ms Young's termly visit recently, she was pleased to see that children's attendance at Prior Heath is generally good and punctuality has improved since last term.

While absence due to illness is unavoidable, holidays taken during term time are disruptive to the child concerned and also to others in the class. We would like to take this opportunity to remind parents that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> 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 have to judge whether there are exceptional circumstances and may request that the Local Authority issue Penalty Notices when an absence is not authorised but is taken. Warnings will not be given where it can be shown that parents have been notified that such absences will not be authorised.

Family holidays are not deemed an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised, therefore, we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holiday dates which are sent to parents and published on the website more than a year in advance.

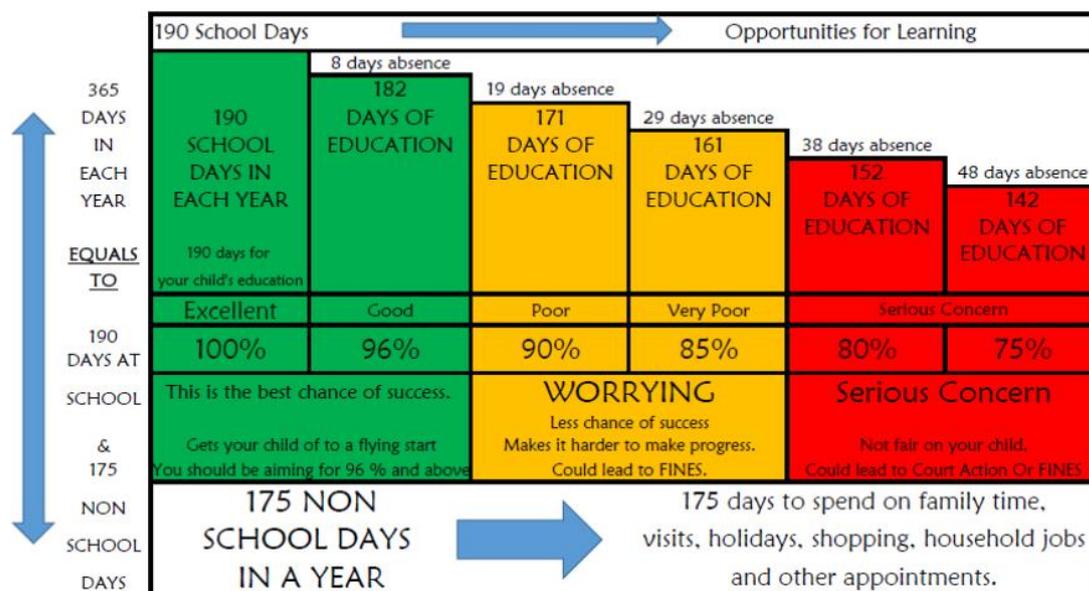
In accordance with the above Regulations, requests for leave of absence are treated sympathetically but only in exceptional circumstances can they be approved. Government legislation states that parents who take their child out of school for **five days or more** during term time, without the authority of the Headteacher, may each be liable to receive a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices will be issued by the Local Authority.

The Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court for the offence for which the Notice was originally issued.

Please be aware that each parent is liable to receive a Penalty Notice for each child who incurs unauthorised absences, for example, if there are two parents and one child, each parent will receive one Penalty Notice. If there are two parents and two children incurring unauthorised absences, each parent will receive two Penalty Notices, which in this case would amount to £120 each if paid within 21 days.

Advice and support is available from our Inclusion Officer, Ms Rachel Young, by contacting the Inclusion Service on 01483 518130.

The table below shows the impact poor attendance can have on children’s education across a school year:



If you are worried about your child’s school attendance and would like to meet with a member of staff, please contact the school office.

### Authorised Absence

Illness and religious observance are recognised as valid reasons for authorised absence. Although medical/dental appointments are also authorised we request that, where possible, **appointments are made outside of school hours**. An Application for Leave of Absence form, available from the school office, must be completed for any absence other than illness. Reasons for the absence should be clearly stated and parents may be invited to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the request. The Application for Leave of Absence form and Attendance Policy are available in the Parents section on the [school website](#).

If your child is absent due to illness or unforeseen circumstances, please inform the school **before 9.30 am** on the first day of absence. Please leave a message on the absence answerphone, including your child’s name and class and the reason for their absence, or speak to the school office. Alternatively, absence can be reported using the ParentMail App. When your child returns, a letter of explanation will be required for our records **in addition to the original message**.

### Persistent Absence

In 2015, the Government reduced the Persistent Absence threshold from 15% to 10%. A pupil is considered to have persistent absence if their attendance falls below 90%. Persistent Absence is monitored by the Local Authority on a half termly basis and if a child’s attendance falls below the 90% threshold parents may be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher.

The following table shows the cumulative absence session thresholds for 10% absence by half term over the course of a school year:

	HT 1	HT 2	HT 3	HT 4	HT5	HT6
PA threshold 10% absence	3.5 days	7 days	10 days	12.5 days	15.5 days	19 days

As you can see, 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 full days of school per year (nearly 4 weeks). Clearly this has a significant impact on your child's progress at school. It is in everyone's interests to ensure that your child misses as little school as possible and we look to you to support us in maintaining good attendance throughout the year.

### **Punctuality**

In order to help children make the best start to the day they need to arrive on time. The classroom doors open at 8.40am and are locked at 8.50am when registration takes place. If children arrive after this time, they must be taken to the school office to sign in and they will be marked as late in the class register.

When a child arrives late to school, there are many consequences:

- He or she misses essential learning at the beginning of lessons – in fact arriving 5 minutes late each day adds up to missing 3 entire days of school by the end of the year. During the first part of the morning, children are given an early morning task to complete. This task allows them to apply or practise key skills that they have previously learnt and as this work is often independent, it contributes towards teacher assessments. If this work is regularly missed, it will have an impact upon your child's progress.
- Children might feel awkward and embarrassed going into the classroom when everyone else is already settled.
- When one person arrives late everyone loses out – the class is disrupted and the teacher must take time away from the other children to explain what has been missed.

The table below shows the impact being late can have over the course of a year.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and remind you that should you require any assistance with your child's attendance or punctuality, we are here to help.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lindsey Chivers  
Headteacher