



**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

17<sup>th</sup> September 2026

Dear Parents,

### **School Attendance**

The school staff and governors, 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 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.

### **Attendance Matters**



Our Attendance Officer, Sue Jones, meets with me every term to evaluate our attendance figures. The focus of each meeting is those children who are regarded as Persistent Absentees whose attendance is below 90% and children who are regarded as Severely Absent whose attendance is below 50%. We also discuss and review unauthorised absence and punctuality. Attendance is an agenda item at each of our termly governors' meetings and is included as a focus during governor monitoring visits. Please see the important information below about punctuality and attendance. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind parents of our absence procedures which are included below.

### **Punctuality**

In order to help children make the best start to the day, it is important that they arrive on time. Arriving late at school can be very disruptive for your child, their teacher and the other children in the class. When a child is late, they miss essential learning at the beginning of lessons. In Reception and Year 1, the first lesson is always phonics. In Year 2, 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 these sessions are regularly missed, it will have an impact upon your child's progress.

Regularly being late for school reduces learning time as indicated below:

| Minutes late every day | Total days missed each year | Hours of learning missed each year |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 5                      | 3                           | 15                                 |
| 15                     | 20                          | 50                                 |
| 30                     | 19 days                     | 95                                 |

It is equally important that children are collected at the end of the school day at 2.50pm, unless they are going to K Club or an after-school activity club. Teachers and office staff are very busy at the end of the day and dealing with children who have not been collected takes up valuable time.

### Term time absence

Whilst our overall attendance is generally good, last year a number of children were taken out of school for family holidays and governors would like to remind parents that holidays should be taken during the school holiday dates.

Absence due to illness was also higher than average during the spring term last year. Whilst we appreciate that there is generally more illness during the winter months, we would also like to take this opportunity to remind parents of the NHS Guidance "[Is my child too ill for school?](#)"

Current research shows that even quite low levels of absence can have a negative impact on achievement. The following chart provides a breakdown of the learning that is missed over the course of a year when children are absent from school:

| % attendance in a school year | Days of absence in a school year | Weeks missed in a school year | Hours of learning missed in a school year |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 98%                           | 4                                | Almost 1 week                 | 20                                        |
| 95%                           | 9.5                              | Almost 2 weeks                | 48                                        |
| 90%                           | 19                               | Almost 4 weeks                | 95                                        |
| 85%                           | 28.5                             | Almost 6 weeks                | 143                                       |

### Leave of Absence & Penalty Notice Reminder

A Leave of Absence request form, which is available from the school office, must be submitted **in advance** for any absence other than illness. If you consider that there are exceptional circumstances relating to your request, please provide us with full details. Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and the absence form will be returned to parents indicating whether or not the request has been approved.

### **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 Inclusion 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 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.**
  - 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 the school office 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 the Surrey Attendance Service as follows:

North West - Tel: 01483 518130

If you should have any questions or you have any concerns about your child's attendance, please don't hesitate to speak to your child's class teacher or contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Lindsey Chivers  
Headteacher