PRIOR HEATH INFANT SCHOOL
POLICY AND PROCEDURES STATEMENT

TITLE: ATTENDANCE POLICY

DATE: September 2026
REVIEW: September 2027

APPROVED/MONITORED BY: Attendance & Behaviour designated governor
AGREED BY: Whole school staff and Governors

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Prior Heath Infant School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for children to get the most from their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need or disability they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "Working together to improve school attendance" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that children succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that children have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

AIMS

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is our expectation that children attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the Headteacher not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on Child Protection and Safeguarding and Behaviour. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

At Prior Heath Infant School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. The school staff, alongside the Local Authority and Department for Education, strongly believe that all children benefit from regular school attendance in order for them to achieve their full potential. To this end, we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers 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. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion (the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school) is:

Mrs Lindsey Chivers, Headteacher. Email: info@prior-heath.surrey.sch.uk.

The name and contact details of the school staff member children and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Mrs Jill Harris, Senior School Administrator. Email: info@prior-heath.surrey.sch.uk

The governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is: Mrs Ammelia Davidge-Stringer.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, children and all members of school staff.

We will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools.

- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify children or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our termly attendance newsletters.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance become a concern.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, the Local Authority and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body of Prior Heath Infant School recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Identifying a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior attendance champion.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the school engages and works effectively with the Local Authority Attendance Service and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for pupil premium.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

The Senior Leadership Team at Prior Heath Infant School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior attendance champion to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors.

- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

All staff at Prior Heath Infant School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

The member of staff responsible for attendance will:

- Monitor and analyse pupil attendance data.
- Undertake weekly attendance meetings with the Senior Attendance Champion.
- Ensure first day calling procedures are adhered to if a child is absent from school without contact from parents.

Prior Heath Infant School requests that parents:

- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life so that we can offer support at the earliest opportunity.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Ensure their child arrives on time.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance and punctuality.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

We will keep an electronic 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 at 8.50am and once during the second session at 1.00pm. It will mark using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (see Appendix 2) 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.

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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

PUNCTUALITY

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Children who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Prior Heath Infant School are:

Gates open at 8.30am
Classroom doors open at 8.40am and are locked at 8.50am
Registers are taken promptly at 8.50am
Registers close at 9.20am
Afternoon registers are taken at 1.00pm
End of the school day is at 2.50pm

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at **8.40am** when children can begin to come into school;
- Registers are taken at **8.50am.**
- Children arriving after **8.50am** are required to come into school via the school office. Office staff will sign them in and the child will be marked as present in the register but

recorded as late 'L'. Parents must provide a reason for their child's lateness which is recorded.

- At **9.20am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence.
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns.
- From time to time a member of the governing body may undertake a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school.

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with the Headteacher. Parents can approach their child's class teacher or the school office at any time if they are having difficulties getting their child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good punctuality.

ABSENCE

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any child's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration (after 9.20am) are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however it is counted as an absence for the session.
- Shopping trips.
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- Their own or family birthdays.
- Holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Day trips.
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance drops to 90% or below for any reason whether the absences are authorised or not. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 school days; equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year). Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to a child's educational prospects. The school will monitor the attendance of children at risk of becoming persistently absent and work with parents to identify and resolve any barriers

Severe Absenteeism (SA)

Severe absence refers to children who are absent for 50% or more of their schooling. Severely absent children may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

The school will monitor and target these children and will make this group a top priority for support. This may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan. It may also include consideration for an Education, Health and Care Plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

ABSENCE DATA

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

We monitor and review all children's absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

Unplanned absence

If a child is absent from school and this is unplanned e.g. for illness, parents must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.20am, when the register closes.
- Parents can leave a message on the school absence telephone line, report the absence via the ParentMail app or send an email to the school office: info@prior-heath.surrey.sch.uk. The message must include the child's name and class together with the reason for absence. Please be aware that, if you do not include a reason for your child's absence you will receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before deciding as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.20 am.
- Parents must ensure that their child returns to school as soon as possible. Medical evidence may be requested where a child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons. When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents and school staff can consider the advice contained within the NHS Guidance "Is my child too ill for school?"

If a child is absent and we haven't been contacted by the parent we will:

- Telephone or text parents on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from them. However, it is the parents' responsibility to contact us.

- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send emails or letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding.
- A referral will be made to the Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point a child will be considered to be "missing from education."

If absence continues, we will:

- Write to parents if their child's attendance is causing concern and/or where punctuality is a concern.
- Arrange a meeting so that parents may discuss the situation with the Headteacher.
- Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of the child.
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

Planned absence

A 'Leave of Absence Request Form' (Appendix 1) which is available from the school office and on the school website must be completed in advance for any planned absence including medical or dental appointments.

Approval for term-time absence

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances".

Only the Headteacher may authorise an absence request. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The Headteacher may also request evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

The Leave of Absence form will be returned to the parents indicating whether or not the absence has been authorised. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was not authorised, or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

The Headteacher may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their child every day.

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we ask parents to take due consideration of these prior to booking a holiday.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- **Illness**.
- **Medical/dental appointments**: Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parents notify the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of

time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a pupil should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office so they can be signed out by office staff. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

- **Religious Observance:** Prior Heath Infant School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider authorising the pupil absence for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

- **Parents travelling for occupational purposes:** This covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showman (fairground people) and circus people, bargees 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.

- **Suspensions or exclusions from school:** If a pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made.

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit/trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration).
- Attending provision arranged by the Local Authority.
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements or because the school premises are closed.

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 Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

   Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more, which do not have to be consecutive, and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, 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.

Notice to Improve

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. The Notice to Improve will include:

- Details of the child's attendance record and details of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
- A clear timeframe for the improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks.
- Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (see Appendix 3)

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.

UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO ATTENDANCE

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some children face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include children who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however we will work with families to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

Parents are advised to contact the Headteacher for more detailed support on attendance should this be required.

Part-time timetables

In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable where a child's individual needs indicate they cannot currently access a full-time education and it would not be in their best interests to do so. We will not use a part-time timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with an alternative provision. We will never put a part-time timetable in place without agreement from the parent/carer and other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the child where it is safe to do so. It will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

We will notify the Attendance Service of all part-time timetables.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

At Prior Heath Infant School, we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform the school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school for example: bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. We will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support parents include:

- Writing to parents if a child's attendance is causing a concern and/or where punctuality is a concern.
- Meeting with parents to discuss attendance/punctuality.
- Creating a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance.
- Offering signposting support to other agencies or services.
- Referrals to an external agency.

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL ATTENDANCE ADVICE OFFICER

The Surrey Attendance Service monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis. The Surrey County Council Attendance Advice Officer will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance.

The Attendance Advice Officer may contact parents if children are consistently late or there are concerns about attendance.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 could, following prosecution, result in a community order, a fine not exceeding £2,500 per parent and/or imprisonment for up to three months.

CHANGING SCHOOLS / DELETION FROM ROLL

For any pupil leaving Prior Heath Infant School, other than at the end of Year 2, parents/carers are required to inform the school office in writing. They must provide the school with the following information:

- The date the child will be leaving the school and starting the next school.
- The name and address of the new school.
- The new home address (if applicable).

This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Attendance Service.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil and, in any event, no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point i.e. when the pupil has completed Year 2 at our school.

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will monitor unauthorised absences and take appropriate action including notifying the Local Authority particularly where children go missing on repeat occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day, in conjunction with "Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2025)".

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed as and when guidance from the Local Authority or Department for Education is updated and, as a minimum, annually by the Headteacher. The policy will be approved by the Full Governing Body.

RELATED POLICIES

Anti-Bullying
Behaviour
Child Protection and Safeguarding
Pupils with Medical Needs
Special Educational Needs & Disabilities
Teaching and Learning

Appendix 1

Prior Heath Infant School

Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please read the following guidance carefully before completing the form overleaf.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

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.

Please complete and submit the information overleaf if you would like the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to validate your request.

Unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more will result in the following action being taken:

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child 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 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 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.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision. In the absence of a decision, parents/carers cannot assume that permission for the absence has been given.

For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Prior Heath Infant School
Application for Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstances

Name of child:	**Class:**
Home Address:	
Date of Absence from:	**To:**
Number of school days:	
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested. (Please provide full details and, if more space is required, please continue on a separate sheet):	
Has your child/children already had any leave of absence since 1st September 2024 resulting in a penalty notice being issued to you (applicant) or any other parent/carer? YES / NO	
If YES, please give dates and details:	
I also have children at:	
Signed (Parent/Carer):	**Date:**
Print name:	
Address (if different from child):	

To be completed by the Headteacher		
Child's attendance level over the last 12 months:		
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:		
Approved		**The absence will be recorded as authorised.**
Not approved		**The absence will be recorded as unauthorised and we may be requesting Surrey County Council to issue a penalty notice per parent/carer per child.**
Explanatory notes:		
Signed: **Headteacher**		**Date:**

Appendix 2 – Attendance Codes

All pupils must be given a registration mark each day. There are two sessions that require a registration mark. Registration will be taken by class teachers at 8.50am (am registration) and at 1.00pm (pm registration).

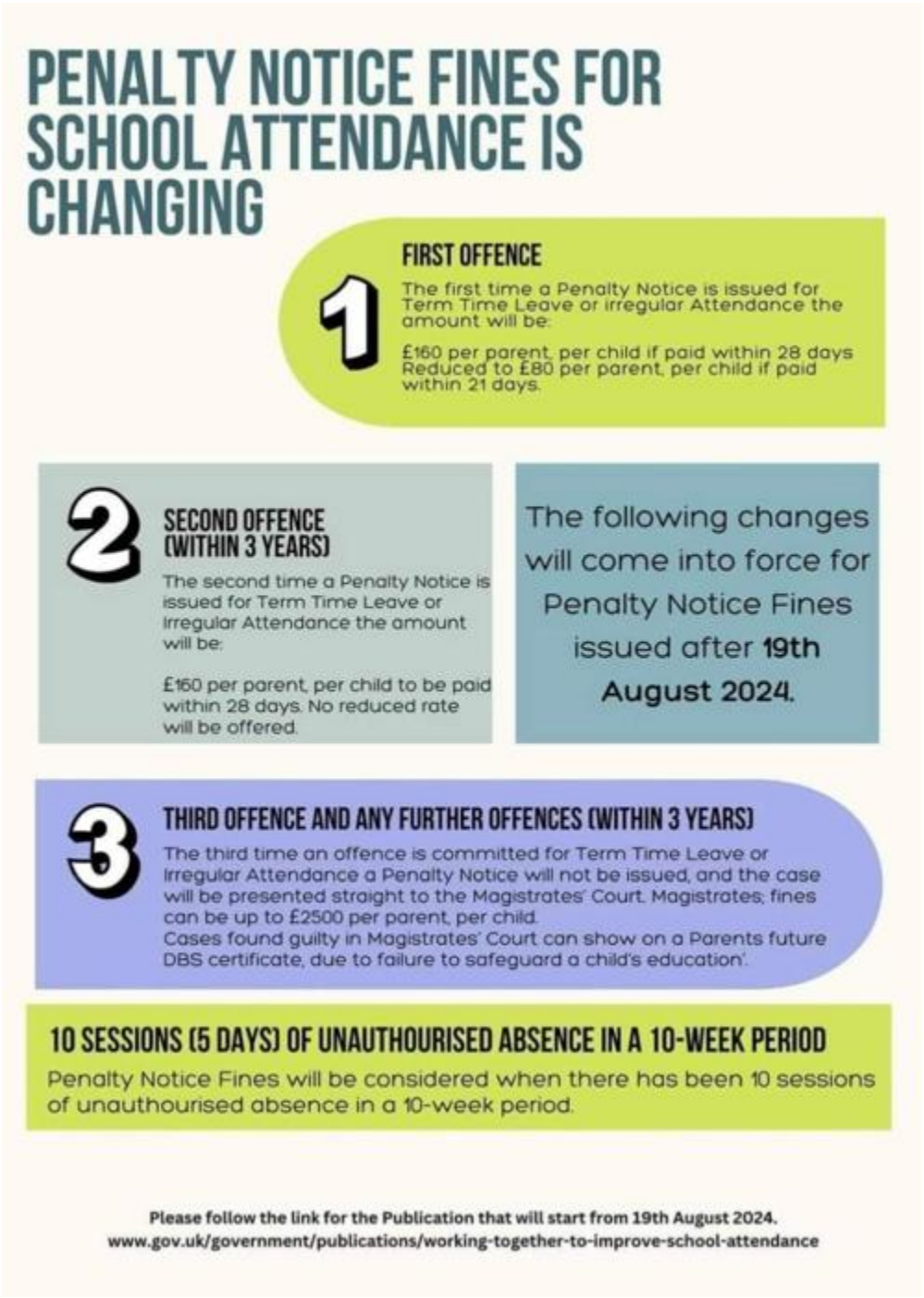
The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the Local Authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 3 – Penalty Notice Fines



Appendix 4 – Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

Prior Heath Infant School
Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The name and contact details of the school staff member parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Mrs Jill Harris, Senior School Administrator
info@prior-heath.surrey.sch.uk Tel: 01276 25546

We expect pupils to attend school for 100% of the academic year. You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:

- Ensure your child arrives on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Classroom doors open at 8.40am and are locked at 8.50am when registration takes place. Children arriving after 8.50am are recorded as late in the attendance register. Children arriving after 9.20am are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Avoid taking your child out of school during term time.
- If your child appears to be only slightly ill, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates. Please refer to the NHS Guidance: Is my child too ill for school?
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance by completing a leave of absence request form.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

Should you require any assistance with your child's attendance or punctuality, please contact your child's class teacher or the school office. We are here to help.

'On the day' absences: what should I do if my child is too unwell to go into school?

On each day your child is unable to come to school, please report this in one of the following three ways:

- Leave a message on the absence line on 01276 25546.
- Leave a message on the ParentMail app.
- Send an email to info@prior-heath.surrey.sch.uk.

Messages must be reported before 9.20am. In the message you must leave your child's full name and class and provide the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

Leave of Absence

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our 'Leave of absence request' form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted **in advance** of the leave of absence, via your child's class teacher or the school office. The form will be completed by the Headteacher and returned to you to advise if the request has been granted or declined. If the request is declined, a letter will also be sent. Please be aware, unauthorised absence may result in a penalty notice being issued. Please see our Attendance Policy for further details.

Senior Attendance Champion – responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school	Mrs Lindsey Chivers Headteacher	info@prior-heath.surrey.sch.uk
Attendance contact	Mrs Jill Harris Senior School Administrator	info@prior-heath.surrey.sch.uk Tel: 01276 25546