



A Parents Guide to School Attendance Shawfield Primary School

This document should be read in conjunction with the school's Attendance Policy, which can be found on our school website.

Shawfield Primary School is committed to providing every child with the best possible education. To achieve this, we need your support to ensure consistent school attendance.

Here's what you need to know about our new strategy starting from 19th August 2024. Full information can be found in the School Attendance Policy, available from the School's Website or a paper copy by request from the School Office.

Securing good attendance is not seen in isolation. It links closely with the school's efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, effective support for children's mental health and wellbeing, and the effective use of resources, including pupil premium funding.

At Shawfield Primary, we believe that attendance is everyone's responsibility. All school staff and governors are committed to working in partnership with parents, the Local Authority, and other local partners to ensure the best possible attendance for every child at our school.

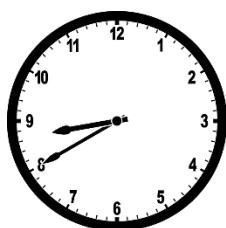


Your legal responsibilities

As a parent, you are legally responsible for making sure your child gets a suitable full-time education. For most parents, this will mean making sure your child is in school every day except when:

- Your child is too ill to go to school.
- You have permission for a leave of absence from school for them not to attend. This will only be agreed by the Headteacher and only in exceptional circumstances.
- Your religious body has a day especially for religious observance.

Timings of the School Day



Start of the School Day

School Gates open at 8:40 am for all children.
Children must be in school by 8:50 am

End of the School Day

3:10 pm

Children in Years R, 1, and 2

3:15 pm

Children in Years 3 and 4

3:20 pm

Children in Years 5 and 6

Whilst some absence is unavoidable, it is important that your child is in school every day they can be for their learning, wellbeing and development.

What do I do if my child is late?

Your child needs to arrive at school on time. Should your child arrive after 8:50am – they will be marked as late. **Parents and Carers will need to attend the School Office to sign their child in using the Sign-In System – a member of staff will also record the reason for your child's late attendance.**

Where children arrive after 9:20am – their session will be marked as unauthorised. Persistent lateness (10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10-week period may lead to the school issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.)



If my child needs to be absent from school, what do I need to do?

You should contact the school as early as possible on the first day of absence to explain why, and by 9:10am each day.

Please call 01252 320379 Option 1 or Option 3 to speak to a member of staff. Children's absence can be reported via the Parentmail app.

If you do not report your child's absence, a school staff member will contact you on the first morning of your their absence to find out why they are not in school. **Parents and carers will need to contact the School Office each day absence continues to update the school on their child's absence.**

Staff from the School Office will contact you regularly to see how children are and when they are likely to return to school. The school may telephone you or contact you via text message for an update. Where there are concerns about the level of contact from home, a visit to your home from a member of staff may be possible – this will be in line with our safeguarding obligations.

My child has a short-term illness. Do they have to go to school, and will I be penalised if they don't?

If your child is ill, read the NHS advice to help you decide whether they can go to school. If they are too ill to attend, you are not breaking the law and will not be penalised. You should let us know as soon as possible on the first day of absence and we will record such absences as authorised. If the absence due to illness is ongoing or frequent you should speak to a member of school staff to see what support can be put in place. The school may request medical evidence if there is concern about the length or frequency of a child's absence.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>



My child is struggling to attend because of an issue at home or getting to school. Who can help us?

Please arrange to talk to Mrs Dixon our Pastoral Care Lead/School Attendance Champion or Mr Burford our school Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENDCO). We may be able to offer further support in partnership with External Agencies to support your child's needs. In exchange, you are expected to agree and take part in accessing the support once it has been put in place. We would like you to regularly meet with us to review what is and isn't working, involving your child if possible. While waiting for help, you should still do everything you can to help your child attend as much as possible.

How do I request a Leave of Absence?

All parents may request a 'leave of absence' for their child, which gives them permission to be absent from school. The Headteacher has the final say over whether to approve the request and for how long your child can be absent. This will only be agreed in 'exceptional circumstances'. These circumstances will be considered by the Headteacher on a case-by-case basis. A form can be collected from the School Office or downloaded from the school website. It must be submitted at least two weeks before the absence is due to start.



Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

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 Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 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.

Please complete an Application of Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstances, if you want 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. This will need to be made at least two weeks in advance of any absence.

If you take your children out of school without authority for 10 sessions, equivalent to 5 or more days (which do not have to be consecutive), then the following will apply:

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.

What communication can I expect about school attendance?

The school will send home your child's attendance certificate every half-term. If your child has missed days in school, we know that this may be because your child has been unwell. We may still call you or chat with you to offer you support. Should your child's levels of absence increase, a letter will be sent home asking for you to meet with Mrs Dixon.

If your child's attendance falls below 90%, their absence will be marked as persistent. At this point, the school will take formal action and invite you to attend an attendance meeting to discuss the reasons for this and consider what support may be offered to address this. Actions agreed upon will be documented, and the school will closely monitor your child's attendance.

Where children received 10 unauthorised session absences (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10-week period – parents/carers will be issued a Notice to Improve. Should there be ongoing issues with unauthorised absence, the school will consider issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice as outlined in the School Attendance Policy

What should I do if I am worried or concerned about my child's attendance?

Please talk to us – as we want to work with you and provide the best support possible.

All guidance explained here refers to the School's Attendance Policy, which was developed in response to UK Government Law and the statutory attendance guidance—Working together to improve school attendance—from 19 August 2024.



Shawfield Primary School
Winchester Road
Ash
GU12 6SX
01252 320379