



HOLMESDALE COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL & NURSERY

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Head Teacher: Mrs S Mullarkey

Thursday 2nd October 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

You may or may not be aware that the Local Authority made changes last year to Penalty Notices that are issued for unauthorised absences. As you know Head Teachers are only able to authorise requests for absence if there are exceptional circumstances. Below is the up-to-date information that came into force on the 19th of August 2024. The school also has an updated attendance policy which is attached to this letter and is published on the school website.

If you consider that there are exceptional circumstances relating to your request, please let the school have full details. Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carers 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.**
 - Surrey County Council may issue Penalty Notices when the absence is not authorised (please be aware that any money collected is kept by Surrey County Council and not the school).

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 your child's school 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 Surrey Attendance Service as follows: -

North West - Tel: 01483 518130 South West - Tel: 01483 517874
North East - Tel: 01372 833588 South East - Tel: 01737 737777

Kind regards

Sharon Mullarkey
Head Teacher

