



HOLMESDALE COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL & NURSERY

Alma Road, Reigate
Surrey RH2 0BY
Tel: 01737 243678

Email:
info@holmesdale.surrey.sch.uk
www.holmesdale.surrey.sch.uk
Head Teacher: Mrs S Mullarkey



30th September 2026

Dear Families,

Term-Time Absence: Attendance Guidance and Penalty Notice Information

We would like to share the current guidance regarding pupil attendance and requests for leave of absence during term time. This information reflects the changes to penalty notices introduced by the Local Authority on 19 August 2024 and explains how these arrangements apply to requests for absence from school.

The school follows Government statutory attendance requirements and Surrey County Council's guidance, alongside our own attendance policy. Our attendance policy is attached to this letter and is also available on the school website.

Under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, Headteachers may only grant leave of absence during term time where exceptional circumstances apply. Each request is considered individually, taking account of the circumstances presented and the relevant guidance.

Where you believe exceptional circumstances apply to your request, please provide the school with full details so that these can be considered as part of the decision-making process.

The Headteacher is responsible for deciding whether an absence can be authorised. These decisions must be consistent with statutory requirements and the school's attendance policy and may be subject to scrutiny by Surrey County Council's Attendance Advice Officer.

The following information explains the circumstances in which Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice and the associated procedures and charges.

Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to prosecuting a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school. Unauthorised absence is absence without the school's agreement, or which is not covered by a medical note. Surrey County Council may issue Penalty Notices in the following circumstances:

1. Unauthorised absence identified during truancy patrols

Pupils identified by police and Attendance Advice Officers (formerly Inclusion Officers) engaged on Truancy Patrols who have incurred unauthorised absences.



Greensand Multi-Academy Trust

Registered in England Company No: 10980776

Registered Office: Pendleton Road, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 7NT



2. Leave of absence during term time

Where a pupil has taken leave of absence during term time for 5 days or 10 sessions or more.

Please note 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.

Where a request for leave of absence is not authorised, Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice when the school notifies the Local Authority.

Warnings will not be given where it can be shown that parents have been notified that such absences will not be authorised.

3. Persistent unauthorised absence

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. This may include a pupil arriving late after the close of registration.

If you have concerns about your child's attendance or believe that an absence may result in a Penalty Notice, please contact the school promptly. We can discuss your child's circumstances and any support that may be available to help maintain regular attendance.

If you have questions about the attendance arrangements or would like further support to improve your child's attendance, please contact the school or the Attendance Advice Officer.

Penalty Notices 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 comply with this requirement will render the parent/carer liable to a Penalty Notice. Alternative education provision will be made available from the sixth day of any exclusion.

Penalty Notice Charges and Consequences of Repeat Unauthorised Absences

The following charges and arrangements apply to Penalty Notices issued in relation to unauthorised absences.

Please note that any monies collected through Penalty Notices are payable to Surrey County Council. The school does not receive any of the money collected from Penalty Notices. The school's role is to apply the attendance policy, consider requests for leave of absence in line with statutory guidance and notify the Local Authority where appropriate

1. First Penalty Notice within the relevant period

If you have not incurred a Penalty Notice relating to your child/children in a rolling three-year period since 19 August 2024, 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. Second Penalty Notice within the relevant period

If you have incurred a Penalty Notice relating to your child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling three-year period will be activated from the date of the first Penalty Notice.

A 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. Further unauthorised absence following two Penalty Notices

If you have incurred two Penalty Notices relating to your child/children within the rolling three-year period since the first Penalty Notice was issued, 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 Section 444 of the 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.

Further Information and Support

We recognise that families may occasionally face circumstances that affect school attendance. If you have questions about a request for leave of absence, the attendance policy or your child's attendance, please contact the school so that we can discuss the matter with you.

Advice and support are also available from an Attendance Advice Officer through the Surrey Attendance Service:

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

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Headteacher

S. Mullarkey

Mrs S Mullarkey

Head teacher

