

At The Write Time School We believe that education is essential for all. To achieve their full potential children, need to attend regularly and punctually. Non-attendance at school for any reason is an important issue that must be treated promptly and seriously. In all cases of non-attendance, it is essential that early action is taken. As a school we understand that securing good attendance rates is about partnership and that Parent/Carers have a critical role in supporting a child's attendance through ensuring they are attending school in line with school policies and the Home School Agreement.

"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.' DfE 2022

Legislation and guidance

[Regulation 5 Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#), [Regulation 6 Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 are the relevant pieces of legislation for this attendance policy and the contents of the attendance register for an independent school.

This policy meets the requirements of this legislation, and of the August 2026 document 'Working together to improve school attendance: Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' which is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a4f9ec6a6586e258d371bd0/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_2026.pdf

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold. The Governors, Head Teacher and staff acknowledge that there is a strong correlation between high attendance and pupil progress.

Policy Aims

- Attendance registers are kept and attendance and punctuality are monitored to ensure that positive attendance patterns are established from the programme's outset.
- The school should achieve, as a minimum, an attendance rate of 75% (as a group average), should have the ambition of 90% actual attendance and put in place effective interventions when there is a concern around individual or and that effective interventions are put in place if this is not achieved.¹
- We recognise that whilst national guidelines exist for minimum attendance figures for individual students, with the nature of TWT's student intake sometimes these figures may not immediately be met. TWT believe that continuously supporting students to improve their attendance is key; if a student arrives to us with an attendance average of 60% from their referral school, an immediate increase of at least 15% may be unlikely. However, TWT will work with all involved to steadily increase this number until it reaches the target figure. There

¹ TWT will be constantly reviewing this policy to ensure fairness to all involved whilst remaining robust and accountable.

is of course no 'one size fits all' number for this approach, and as such, individual learners require individual planning and implementation techniques.

Policy Implementation

The TWT school day starts at 09:30 Monday to Friday. If students arrive after 09:30 they will be marked as 'Late'; how late the student is (in minutes measured from 09:30) will be recorded on Arbor MIS. Students have until 10:00 to arrive before they are marked at 'Late After Registration Closes'; this will result in a 'U' code being entered into the register, and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

PM Registration is taken at 13:20 Monday to Friday. There is no Late mark for PM registration, only a 'U' code for students that arrive after that time from any off-site activity.

In achieving those aims these principles of good practice should be followed:

- **Establish good habits early** - help individuals to establish good regular attendance and good behaviour from the start, involving parents/carers/guardians in the process (i.e. at the point of contract).
- **Early intervention** - prompt intervention is needed where there is poor behaviour or unexplained absence so that it is clear that these behaviours will not be accepted. There is a clear scale of intervention when learner attendance falls below 75% (Appendix B).
- **First-day response** - establishing the first-day response can be a positive and proactive measure and visible demonstration of The Write Time's vigilance, care and concern for a learner's safety and well-being.
- **Rewarding achievements** - positive recognition of individual learners, or groups of learners, for positive behaviour and attendance.
- **Supporting behaviour management** - using a range of behavioural strategies to maintain and improve high standards of behaviour and discipline.
- **Working with parents/carers** - project staff should encourage parents/carers to support good attendance and behaviour through home-school agreements, meetings, etc.
- **Involving learners** can help reinforce behaviour policies/strategies by active involvement in anti-bullying/harassment policies.
- **Identifying underlying causes** - through regular review of the learners' progress i.e. tutorials, frequent contact with parents/carers, and other agencies, monitoring absence patterns and investigation.

Completing Attendance Registers

The school is required to take a register twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon. The register shows whether the young person is present, engaged in an approved activity off-site or absent.

As the school's register is taken electronically via Arbor MIS this should be printed off every month and a hard copy stored where it is readily accessible.

All attendance register data is kept on Arbor MIS unless a technical failure prevents access to Arbor. In the rare event of this occurring then:

- registers can either be kept in a bound format or on single pages and must be completed in either black or blue ink.
- staff must ensure the original entry in a register and any subsequent correction must be distinguishable.
- both the original entry and the correction should be preserved so that, on retrieval, the entries appear in chronological order – this means that correction fluids must not be used on the register.
- Paper-based attendance data must be transferred to Arbor MIS as soon as practically possible.

If a young person is absent the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised by marking it with the appropriate code - see below.

Authorised absence is where the Headteacher has either given approval in advance for a young person to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences must be treated as unauthorised. Parents may not authorise absence whether in advance or retrospectively.

An Attendance Report is sent daily by reception. These reports are reviewed daily by the Outreach Development Tutors, the Headteacher and the Proprietor.

Weekly attendance monitoring meetings occur between the Headteacher and (ODTs) who have responsibility to examine absence trends, and to deliver and monitor attendance interventions, and student lateness.

A young person can legally leave the school on the last Friday in June in the school year when the young person reaches 16 or 18. However, TWT delivers Functional Skills qualifications up until the end of the Croydon school term dates and students are expected to attend these sessions and exams.

For the correct annotation of the Register: See Appendix A - DfE codes

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

It is for the school, not the parent, to decide whether or not to authorise any absences. The school will not authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Where no parental explanation is given.
- For extended visits overseas where no approval has been given.
- For holidays in term time
- For shopping trips.
- For leisure days out.
- Where it is believed a parent is condoning an unnecessary absence.
- In other cases where it is deemed there is no reasonable explanation.

Leave of Absence

Requests for Leave of Absence must be made in writing to the Head Teacher. At The Write Time School, a Request Form (see Appendix C) should be obtained from the main office and be completed and sent into school before any arrangements are made.

Absence for the observance of a religious festival will be authorised for a maximum of two days per school year. Approval for absence abroad, in the family's home country, will only be considered on receipt of a completed Request Form, and only then in exceptional circumstances. The Governing Body has delegated responsibility in this matter to the Head Teacher.

If the pupil fails to attend after this period, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised and will be referred to Education Welfare Officer.

Change of Address and other contact details

Parents must inform the school immediately if they, or the named emergency contacts have a change of address, phone number or email address. In case of emergency, we must be able to contact the parents, carers or a third named person. Parents must provide this information when they first register their child and keep information including telephone numbers up to date.

Legal sanctions

If a pupil fails to attend The Write Time School we may choose, as a matter of last resort, to refer the matter to the appropriate local authority who may issue parents a Fixed Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence and proceed to prosecute for non-attendance.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £80 each within 21 days or £160 each within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to refer the issue of non-attendance to the Local Authority for prosecution rests with the Headteacher, and will take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Safeguarding / Children Missing in Education

Children who are not attending school and are not being provided with suitable alternative educational provision will be referred to the local authority as Children Missing Education.

Children going missing can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). CME are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

The School will work in partnership with Croydon Childrens' Services or home LA of the child to report any child deemed missing in education in accordance with the DFE guidance. The school reserves the right to withdraw a child from their roll in accordance with the DFE guidance and LAs protocols.

Appendix A: DfE Absence and Attendance Codes

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes:

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in a supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

Code V: Educational visit or trip

Code W: Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education.

Authorised Absence from School

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Code C1: Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad

Code C2: Pupils on part-time timetables

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Code J1: - Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution

Code K: Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Code Q: Pupils unable to attend school due to lack of access arrangements

Code R: Religious observance

Code S: Study leave

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Note with regards to remote / 'on-line' learning

'pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate [authorised] absence code. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register' DfE Guidance 2024

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is when a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y1: Unable to attend - Absence due to transport normally provided not being available

Code Y2: Unable to attend - Widespread disruption to travel

Code Y3: Unable to attend - Part of school closed

Code Y4 - Unable to attend - Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures)

Code Y5: Unable to attend - Pupils in the criminal justice system

Code Y6: Unable to attend - Absence due to public health guidance or law

Code Y7: Unable to attend - Any other unavoidable cause

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

Appendix B: Attendance Interventions

Attendance interventions

Once a student's attendance falls below 75% due to unauthorised absence the following interventions shall be carried out.

1

4 UNAUTHORISED SESSIONS

A school awareness letter to be sent along with a copy of the students attendance report. This is to highlight to the family that their child has fallen below schools expectation on attendance and to remind family that they are legally responsible to ensure their child attends school.

2

8 SESSIONS

Letter to be sent requesting a meeting with parents to discuss reasons for poor attendance. The meeting is an opportunity for all parties to come up with an action plan to support the student/family to improve attendance. This should be reviewed in a timely manner

3

16 SESSIONS

A court warning letter to be sent to families when steps 1 & 2 have failed to improve attendance for the student.

4

22 SESSIONS

A referral to be made to local authority due to all interventions failing to improve the students attendance

Illness

ILLNESS CONCERN 10 AUTHORISED SESSIONS

Letter to be sent home once a student acquires 10 sessions of authorised illness. This will state that parents must provide evidence of any future absence due to illness if the absence is to be authorised.

Child missing education

CME 5 & 10 DAY THRESHOLDS

After 5 days of absence with no communication or refusal to attend school a home visit should be done.

After 10 days of absence with no communication or refusal to attend school a referral to Local Authority should be made (CME)

Appendix C:



Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please read the following guidance carefully.

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 and submit this form 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.

Unauthorised absence of 10 session (5 days) or more in a rolling 10 school weeks will result in the following action being taken:

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carers 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/carers 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/carers 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.



Name of child:		Class:
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for from:		
Number of school days:		
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:		
Has your child/children already had any leave of absence since 01 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:
Address:		