



# THE HERMITAGE and THE OAKTREE SCHOOLS

## Attendance Policy

Person Responsible:	The Executive Headteacher
Date Adopted:	October 2007
Date of last review:	Summer Term 2022
Date of next review:	Autumn Term 2023

***This policy should be read in conjunction with Surrey County Council school attendance and absence information and advice:***

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/at-school/attendance-and-absence>

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At The Hermitage and Oaktree Schools, we are committed, in partnership with the parents, children, governors, and the Local Authority (LA), to building schools which serve the community commendably, and of which the community is proud.
- 1.2 The Hermitage and Oaktree Schools staff, alongside the LA, firmly believes that regular school attendance is key to achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters (staying healthy, enjoying and achieving, keeping safe, contributing to the community, and social and economic well-being). Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

### 2.0 EXPECTATIONS

- 2.1 We expect that all children will:
  - attend school 100% of the time (unless the absence is authorised by the Executive Headteacher);
  - attend school punctually;
  - attend school appropriately prepared for the day.
- 2.2 We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day-to-day responsibility for the children and young people will:
  - encourage regular attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
  - ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, fully prepared for the day;
  - ensure that they contact the school, on the first day of absence, whenever the child/children is/are unable to attend;
  - notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details;

- notify the school promptly of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

2.3 We expect that school staff will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children, provide a safe learning environment and provide a sympathetic response to any child's concerns;
- encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all children, at registration;
- monitor every child's attendance and punctuality;
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a child fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of children who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the School's and the Local Authority's expectations with regard to regular attendance;
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain reasons for the absence. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verification from the family doctor or other relevant body may be requested;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the Inclusion Service may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order;
- meet the requirements of the UN Convention - The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that, where possible, children are consulted on all decisions that relate to them.

2.4 Children leaving during the school day:

- 2.4.1 Children are not permitted to leave the premises without prior permission from the school;
- 2.4.2 Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time;
- 2.4.3 Parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected time of return. Children must be collected by parents/carers;
- 2.4.4 Parents/carers must sign out their child/children on leaving the school and sign them back in upon their return.

### **3.0 REGISTRATION AND PUNCTUALITY**

- 3.1.1 Punctuality to school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with the class teacher is one of the most important periods in the day. Lateness to school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount therefore that all children arrive at school on time.

#### **The Hermitage School**

- The Hermitage School opens at 8.30am and registration takes place at 8:40am; students who arrive after 8:40am will be recorded as late to school.

- If a child arrives at The Hermitage School after 8.40am the parent/carer must sign in the late book to ensure their child's presence on site is noted, particularly in case of a fire drill.
- Morning registration will close at 9:00am. If a student arrives at The Hermitage School after this time, the lateness will be recorded as a U code (an unauthorised absence) and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.00pm at The Hermitage School.
- Lateness by a student will be dealt with through the school behavioural system and may be referred to the Inclusion Service.
- At the Hermitage School, the school day ends at 3:10pm.

### **The Oaktree School**

- The Oaktree School gates opens at 8.30am and close at 8:45am
- Classroom doors open at 8:40 and Registration takes place at 8:45am; students who arrive after 8:45am will be recorded as late marked with an L code.
- Morning registration will close at 9.00am. If a child arrives after this time, the lateness will be recorded as a U code (an unauthorised absence) and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.

## **4.0 ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE**

4.1 Regular attendance is encouraged in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other children;
- by providing regular attendance statistics;
- by monitoring children, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Inclusion Service if the irregular attendance continues.

## **5.0 RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE**

5.1 When a child does not attend The Hermitage and Oaktree Schools and a reason has not been previously provided, steps will be taken to ascertain why the child is absent.

5.1.1 Parents/carers are requested to contact school by 9.30 a.m. at the latest on each day of absence (or to provide a letter or phone call for longer planned absences or those due to longer term illness). If the school does not hear from parents/carers on each day of the absence, then they will endeavour to contact them after 10.30am on each day of the absence to ensure that the child is safe and being cared for (this is especially important for children who may walk to school on their own after a period of absence).

5.1.2 On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 10:30am the school will endeavour to contact them that day by automated text, or personal telephone or email messages.

- 5.1.3 If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer throughout the day.
- 5.1.4 If contact cannot be made, the Executive Headteacher must be made aware and then subsequent action, which may involve seeking advice from other professionals, will be decided upon. This is to ensure the safety and welfare of our families.

## 6.0 UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- 6.1 The schools term dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book any leave of absence during the school holidays. If a family leave of absence in term time is unavoidable, parents/carers should apply to the school using the 'Application for Leave of Absence' application form; however, it is no longer policy to authorise any absences due to a leave of absence being taken during term time. Some exceptional circumstances may be considered when appropriate.
- 6.2 No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right.
- 6.3 Where a child is taken out of The Hermitage and Oaktree Schools for a leave of absence during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the Executive Headteacher, each parent/carer may be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child.

## 7.0 PENALTY NOTICES

- 7.1 The Inclusion 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 The Hermitage and Oaktree Schools and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.
- 7.2 The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, Surrey County Council will consider a prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.
- 7.3 Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued
  - 7.3.1 Pupils identified by police who have incurred unauthorised absences.

**The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 states that Headteachers 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.**

- 7.3.2 Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Executive Headteacher, each parent may be 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/carers 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.

If an absence exceeds 10 days, with no contact from home, the School's Inclusion Officer will be informed.

If an absence exceeds 20 days, and still no contact from home, your child's name will be removed from the school roll and you will have to reapply for a place upon your return.

- 7.3.3 The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 7 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service 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.
- 7.3.4 Late arrival after close of registration. With the exception of unauthorised leaves of absence taken in term time, parents/carers will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued. If a warning is issued, then a child will be given 15 school days to show improvement before the Penalty Notice is issued.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

- 7.4.1 Penalty Notices relating to Exclusions  
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 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/carer liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. 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.

## **8.0 CHANGING SCHOOLS**

- 8.1 It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible. A child will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:
- the date the child will be leaving the school and starting the new school;
  - the address of the new school;
  - the new home address, if it is known and is applicable.

The child's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible.