



School attendance

Information and advice

Once you have registered your child at a school it is your responsibility to make sure that s/he attends regularly and punctually.

If you fail to do so the Local Authority has a statutory duty to consider legal action to enforce school attendance. This may lead to the issuing of a **penalty notice, prosecution** or application for an **Education Supervision Order**.

Who Authorises School Absence?

The Head Teacher authorises absence depending on his/her belief that the reason given for absence by the parent/carer is justifiable and/or genuine.

Holidays in Term Time

School holiday dates are published well in advance and parents are expected to plan and take their family holidays at this time so as not to disrupt their children's education. In exceptional circumstances Head Teachers have discretion to authorise leave in term time but parents should be aware that this is not a legal entitlement.

Taking your child out of school without authorisation from the Head Teacher will result in absence being shown as 'unauthorised' and may result in a referral to The Education Welfare Service and legal action being taken against you.

If you need help or advice to ensure that your child attends school regularly please contact your child's school and/or The Education Welfare Service in the area in which your child's school is situated.

Surrey County Council The Education Welfare Service Contact Telephone Numbers

North West Area 01483 518130
(Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Woking)

North East Area 01372 833588
(Spelthorne, Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell)

South West Area 01483 517179
(Guildford & Waverley)

South East Area 01737 737777
(Mole Valley, Tandridge, Reigate & Banstead)

Help your child achieve his/her potential by supporting good school attendance!



The Role of The Education Welfare Service

All Surrey maintained schools have an allocated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) whose job it is to support schools and parents to ensure that every child attends school regularly. EWOs can receive referrals and act upon enquiries from schools, parents, other agencies or members of the public when a child is not attending school.

Upon receipt of a referral the EWO will discuss the situation with school first, and will then call a school meeting or make a home visit, to try and establish why the child/young person is not attending school. It is the EWO's job to assist in the resolution of the problem by involving other agencies if necessary, and working with all parties to devise an action plan to support full-time attendance at school or any agreed alternative provision. The EWO will remain involved until this is achieved.

It is in your's and your child's best interests to co-operate with the EWO to resolve attendance problems so that your child is in receipt of the education s/he is entitled to.

If you do not co-operate with the school or the EWO to address the attendance issue and establish regular school attendance. The Education Welfare Service, acting for the Local Authority, has a statutory duty to consider legal proceedings.

Your Role as Parent/Carer

All parents want the best for their children and a good education helps to ensure that children have the best start in life. School equips them for succeeding both academically and socially so that they can achieve in their exams and learn how to make and manage relationships.

Children who miss school are more likely to become victims or perpetrators of crime. The more school children miss the harder it is to catch up. Statistics show that 90% of persistent absentees (those with attendance below 80%) fail to achieve 5 or more good GCSE grades, or equivalent.

Poor examination results limit young people's options and poor attendance suggests to colleges and employers that these students are unreliable. Good school outcomes are the passport into higher education and better jobs.

What can you do?

- Encourage good school attendance.
- Equip your child for school with the correct uniform, PE kit, school bag, pencil case, books etc.
- Take an interest in your child's educational progress by attending parent's evenings and academic tutoring sessions.
- Make time to discuss your child's day with him/her.
- Contact the school if your child is worried about something which is causing him/her to be reluctant to attend school.

- Make sure you know the name of your child's class/form tutor and Head of Year/House (secondary school).
- Advise school of reasons for absence and likely return date as soon as possible on the first day of such absence and daily thereafter if necessary.
- Make medical/dental appointments after school hours wherever possible.
- DO NOT take holidays during term time – this is not an entitlement and may be detrimental to your child's education.
- Contact your school's EWO if you need help or advice regarding attendance issues (see overleaf).

What the Law says

The Education Act 1996 states that parents and carers must ensure that all children of compulsory school age (5-16) receive a full-time education that is suitable for their age, ability and aptitude and special educational needs.

Children must be educated from the commencement of the school term following their 5th birthday, until the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach their 16th birthday.

The Local Authority has a responsibility to ensure that parents fulfil their legal obligation and must also ensure that there are enough school places for all children to attend. As a parent you may be committing an offence if you fail to ensure that your child attends school regularly.