



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance

Contents

1. Aims and Ethos	2
2. Policy Statement.....	4
3. Definitions	5
4. Key contacts	5
5. Publication of this policy	5
6. Responsibilities	6
7. Timings of the School day and Registration	8
8. Leave of absence	8
9. The Attendance Register	9
10. Monitoring and Intervention	10
11. Additional needs	11
12. Safeguarding and Attendance	12
13. Data Collection and Reporting	12
14. Attendance Strategy	13
15. Document Information	13
Appendix 1: Managing Attendance Concerns at Surbiton High School	14
Appendix 2: Registration Codes	16
Appendix 3: Further Information about Attendance and Absence Codes	18
Attending the School (and Lateness).....	18
Attending a place other than the school	18
Absent – Leave of absence	19
Leave of Absence Requests – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’	19
Medical/Dental Appointments	20
Part-time timetables - Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	20



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

Absent – other authorised reasons	20
Mobile pupil - Parent travelling for occupational purposes.....	21
Religious Observance	21
Illness	21
Suspensions (Exclusions)	22
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	23
Absent - unauthorised absence.....	23
Administrative codes	24

1. Aims and Ethos

Surbiton High School aims to **inspire, encourage and empower** our young people to discover and embrace their individuality in an intellectually rigorous academic environment. Balanced with outstanding pastoral care, our students become compassionate, respectful, courageous, and inquisitive members of the community, living out the School's motto: *Amor nos semper ducat* (May love always lead us).

Our Values

We are compassionate:

We are kind and we care, in both thought and action. We consider those less fortunate and strive to support and offer aid. We are mindful of the gentle power of positive actions. We support and encourage those around us.

We are respectful:

We respect all people equally. We respect ourselves, our learning, our community, our environment, and the planet we all share. We strive to act with respect and integrity in all things. When we disagree, we do so respectfully.

We are courageous:

When challenged by our fears we are determined, not deterred. We call on resilience for strength when in the heat of the struggle. We bravely chase our dreams and fight for what we believe. When we fall, we pick ourselves up and forge forward.

We are inquisitive:

We understand that a thoughtful question is the key to unlock understanding. We believe where answers provide ends, questions pose exciting beginnings. We are eager to explore, we question to discover, we are curious to learn more of the world at large.

We are a community:



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

We are united - with a common focus. We value belonging to a wider community: our school community, our local community, our global community. We are inclusive of all, no matter our differences. We value and nurture the connections we form.

We achieve these aims through our *Charter for Happiness and Well-being*. Our pupils:

- **are inspired to deploy their highest strengths to tackle all situations**, developing a growth mindset and a can-do attitude, equipped with the tools to maximise their positive emotions
- **are encouraged to find their niche**, to be fully engaged in educational activities and to meet the highest challenges that come their way
- **are coached and encouraged to develop strong relationships**, to be empathetic and responsive to the needs of themselves and others
- **are empowered to lead a meaningful life**, to be able to understand what their goals are and to know what they are striving for
- **are empowered to draw strength from celebrating their accomplishments**, in order to tackle new challenges

We achieve these aims through our inculcation of *Learning Habits*. Our children:

- **are inspired in their thinking**, to ask questions, to make connections, to imagine possibilities, to reason methodically and to capitalise on their resources
- **are encouraged to be emotionally invested in their learning**, persevering in the face of difficulties, noticing subtle differences and patterns, managing their distractions, and becoming absorbed in their learning
- **are empowered to be fully involved in their learning**, growing in interdependence, collaborating effectively, listening empathetically to others, and imitating their learning habits
- **are inspired, encouraged, and empowered to be productive**, planning their learning in advance, revising and reviewing their progress, distilling important information, and developing their own meta-learning.

United Learning and the United Church Schools' Trust

Surbiton High School is part of *United Learning* and the *United Church Schools' Trust*. The School has an Anglican foundation, valuing its Christian heritage whilst welcoming staff and children from all faiths and none. We share with United Learning its core mission statement "to bring out the best in everyone". We are committed to the aims of United Learning, including its *Framework for Excellence*, which can be found at: www.unitedlearning.org.uk



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

2. Policy Statement

Surbiton High School recognises that high attendance and punctuality are fundamental to academic success, personal development, and the wellbeing and safety of pupils. This policy sets out expectations, procedures and responsibilities of all pupils, parents, staff, and school leaders Surbiton High School in relation to attendance.

Its purpose is to promote high levels of attendance and punctuality; to ensure every pupil has access to a full-time suitable education; to support families in meeting their legal obligations; to identify and address patterns of poor attendance early and to ensure there are clear procedures in place for monitoring and intervention.

Whilst all pupils have a right to full-time education and the School has high attendance expectations for all pupils, the School will account for the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts. In applying this policy, the school will consider its duties under the *Equality Act 2010* and the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

This policy was developed having regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE) 2024
- the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014,
- Children Missing Education (DfE) 2024

Surbiton High School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Attendance Policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the School's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

This policy applies to all members of our School community, including those in our EYFS setting. Surbiton High School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in this document.

In line with our Provision of Information policy, this document is available to all interested parties on request from the Senior School, Girls' Preparatory School or Boys' Preparatory School offices, and should be read in conjunction with our Missing or Uncollected Pupils Policy and Timetables for the School Day.



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

This document is reviewed annually by Matthew Close, Senior Vice-Principal, or as events or legislation change requires. The next scheduled date for review is September 2026.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Policy:

- **Senior Attendance Champion** – The member of the Senior Leadership Team designated to oversee all attendance-related matters and to champion and promote good attendance. He is responsible for the School's strategy for monitoring and improving attendance (e.g. analysis of data, regular reporting, prompt follow-up of absence etc).
- **Persistent Absence** – Attendance below 90%.
- **Unauthorised Absence** – Absence that has not been authorised by the School in line with the processes set out below.
- **Parent** – In this document the term 'parent' is to refer to a parent, carer, guardian, or anyone with legal responsibility for the pupil.

4. Key contacts

If a pupil is absent due to illness their parent(s) are required to contact the School via telephone or the appropriate email address:

surbitonseniorschoolabsence@surbitonhigh.com

surbitonboysprepabsence@surbitonhigh.com

surbitongirlsprepabsence@surbitonhigh.com

Senior Attendance Champion	Matthew Close	Senior Vice-Principal	matthew.close@surbitonhigh.com
Form Tutor	For initial support on attendance please contact the pupil's relevant Form Tutor		

5. Publication of this policy

This policy is published on the School Website and will be sent to parents when pupils join the School and when it is updated. A reminder of this policy will be sent at the beginning of the school year to all parents. Related Policies, procedures and other documentation include:



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

- Missing and Uncollected Pupils
- Timetable for the School Day

6. Responsibilities

The Local Governing Body will:

- Have oversight of attendance at the School.
- Delegate responsibilities under this policy as described below.
- Monitor and review attendance on a termly basis.
- Ensure this policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

The Principal will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented and reviewed annually.
- Monitor attendance data regularly.
- Report termly attendance to the Local Governing Body and United Learning.
- Ensure that staff are appropriately trained.

The Senior Attendance Champion will:

- Oversee daily attendance systems.
- Maintain accurate attendance records.
- Work with families, pastoral teams, and external agencies to address attendance concerns.
- Ensure that staff are familiar with attendance expectations and processes and apply them consistently.
- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Monitor and evaluate the efficacy of the School's attendance strategies and processes.

Tutors/Class Teachers will:

- Complete morning and afternoon registration accurately.
- Monitor attendance daily.



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

- Refer unexplained absences to the reception team to make same-day enquiries with parents.
- Raise concerns promptly with the Senior Attendance Champion.
- Deal with lateness consistently in line with the Behaviour Policy.

The Reception Team will:

- Follow up on the day regarding any unexplained absences.
- Liaise with the Senior Attendance Champion to ensure pupil absences are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Ensure attendance registers are completed accurately.

All staff will:

- Promote and regularly communicate the importance of good attendance for example through assemblies, PSHE lessons and conversations with pupils and parents.
- Support a School culture of high expectations in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- Be aware that poor attendance may be a symptom of wider concerns about a child.
- Attend training and briefings relevant to attendance and adhere to this policy.

Parents are expected to:

- Be aware of their legal obligation to ensure that their child(ren) of compulsory school age receive an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.
- Be aware that failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the school about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably.
- Ensure their child attends School daily and on time.
- Notify the school of any absence and provide a reason for it by 10am on the first day of absence
- Provide reasons and, if requested, evidence for absences (e.g., medical notes).
- Try to book routine dentist and other appointments outside the School day wherever possible.
- Use the procedure below under "Leave of absence" when seeking advance authorisation for absence.



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school daily and arrive on time.
- Be responsible for attending registration and lessons punctually.

7. Timings of the School day and Registration

Senior School

Form Tutors are required to take attendance registers for their Form each morning at 8.25am. Pupils are also registered at the beginning of each lesson by Subject Teachers. During “period 4” the attendance register for the “afternoon session” is taken.

Sixth Form

Form Tutors are required to take attendance registers for their Form each morning at 8.25am. Sixth Formers are also registered at the beginning of each lesson by Subject Teachers. If a student’s teacher is absent for a lesson and there is no formal cover teacher, the student will register as present with the Sixth Form PA or Administration team. During “period 4” the attendance register for the “afternoon session” is taken.

Girls’ Prep School

Class Teachers are required to take attendance registers for their class at the start of the morning and the afternoon sessions.

Boys’ Prep School

Class Teachers are required to take attendance registers for their class at the start of the morning and the afternoon sessions.

8. Leave of absence

- Applications for authorised leave of absence during the School day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will only be permitted if made in writing to the Principal’s Office.
- The School will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, the pupil's past attendance record, and the relevant background context behind the request.
- If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Principal to determine the length of the time the pupil is or was permitted to be away from School. It will be recorded as an authorised absence.



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

- A leave of absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents and pupils belong. Parents are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.

9. The Attendance Register

Attendance and absences are recorded in the school Attendance Register using the relevant codes as set out in *The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024* and the statutory guidance *Working together to improve school attendance (DfE) 2024*.

The Attendance Register will show whether a pupil is present, late, attending a place other than School or absent.

Absences are either:

- Authorised: e.g., illness, religious observance, medical appointments (evidence may be required).
- Unauthorised: e.g., holidays during term time without authorisation, absence without valid explanation.

The attendance register is kept electronically, and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy. Registers are legal records and, in line with current legislation, the School will preserve every entry in the attendance register for 6 years from the date the data was entered.

Where amendments are made, the School will ensure the registers show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. As the attendance register is a record of the pupil's presence at the time it was taken, this register will only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry.

Senior School

If the School has not received any information regarding a pupil's absence by 10am then a text message will be sent to parents alerting them that their child has not arrived in School and parents are asked to contact the School immediately.



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

During the School day, the Reception Team runs a report from iSAMS after every Period. If a pupil is marked as 'n' for more than one lesson a search of the school is conducted, following the Missing and Uncollected Pupils Policy. If the pupil is not found, the parents are contacted.

Senior School signing in and out

If a pupil arrives at School late and misses registration, then they are required to sign in via the electronic terminal at Reception as soon as they arrive. This information is then updated / reconciled in the register by Administration Staff.

Whenever a pupil leaves the School site before the end of the day, they are required to show a member of Administration Staff authorisation and then sign out via the electronic terminal at Reception. The reasons for this may include:

- Pupils who have permission to attend elite sports coaching off site
- Authorised absences for appointments
- If a pupil is sent home as they are unwell

Prep Schools

If a pupil is marked as absent the administration team will contact the parents to confirm the absence.

If a pupil is absent for 6 days without reason or permission, or fails to attend School regularly, this is reported to the local authority (Kingston Children's Services) by Matthew Close, Senior Vice-Principal in line with local arrangements: [AfC - Children Missing Education](#)

If a pupil leaves the School when their next school is not known, they are deleted from the register, and this is reported to the local authority (Kingston Children's Services) by Matthew Close, Senior Vice-Principal.

10. Monitoring and Intervention

Data from the Attendance Register is monitored to identify weekly attendance patterns and trends and to deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. Identifying the pupils who need support will not just focus on persistent and severe absence, but the School will also seek to identify pupils who can be supported earlier before patterns become entrenched.

The school will work with parents and pupils and relevant school staff such as the SENCO, if appropriate, to identify particular barriers to attendance and to put in place appropriate support. Support will be tailored to the individual circumstances of the pupil. As a general guide, the following principles will be followed:



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

- Attendance below 95% triggers investigation and conversations with parents to identify barriers to attendance.
- Below 90% (persistent absence) or below 50% (serious absence) prompts a structured intervention plan; in such cases the school will work with the local authority to put in place targeted support which may include Early Help.
- Home visits may be conducted if absence is unexplained or safeguarding concerns are raised about a child who is not attending School.
- Attendance panels may be convened with families and senior leaders.

11. Additional needs

It is acknowledged that some pupils may find it harder than others to attend School; for example, those with special educational needs, disabilities, medical conditions, and/or social, emotional, and mental health difficulties. In such cases the School will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance and to put the right support in place.

Where appropriate, this will include considering what reasonable adjustments can be made to remove any potential in-school barriers to attendance. Where it is in the pupil's best interests, a temporary part-time timetable can be considered part of a re-integration package to meet the child's needs and encourage regular attendance at school. This may be appropriate where a pupil is unable initially to attend full-time education. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and there will be pastoral support and other programmes running alongside the part-time timetable to encourage full-time attendance.

Where a pupil has an education, health, and care plan (EHCP) the school will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls or the School become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.

The School may, in limited circumstances, with the agreement of parents, provide remote education to enable pupils who are well enough to learn but unable to attend the school site for a time-limited period. In such cases, the pupil will be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code.



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

12. Safeguarding and Attendance

All pupils

Persistent or unusual absence patterns may be indicators of safeguarding concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead, who is also the Attendance Champion, will be informed if:

- A pupil is absent without explanation for more than two consecutive days.
- A pattern of concern arises.
- Follow up action in such cases may include a referral to children's social care.

13. Data Collection and Reporting

- Attendance data is reported to the Local Governing Body and United Learning on a regular basis.
- Individual pupil attendance is included in school reports.
- The school is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority. This includes:
 - (1) New pupil and deletion returns outside of normal transition time.
 - (2) Attendance returns where a pupil has 6 consecutive days of unauthorised absence in line with local arrangements: [AFC - Children Missing Education](#)
 - (3) Sickness returns (where a pupil is unable to attend because of sickness and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more in one school year)
- The School must provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State and inspectorates.
- Where appropriate, the School is expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

14. Attendance Strategy

This policy supports the attendance strategy of Surbiton High School, which aims to promote a culture of high attendance that supports pupil welfare and educational outcomes such that all pupils are accounted for and supported to access their full-time education entitlement. The School seeks to ensure that attendance is accurately recorded, monitored, and reported, and that our systems and processes are designed to help reduce absences and to identify and address patterns of persistent or severe absence, including for pupils with SEND or health needs, through early intervention and partnership with families.

15. Document Information

Document Control	
Document Title:	Independent Schools Attendance Policy
Version:	1
Summary of Changes from Previous Version:	N/A
Name of Originator/Author (including job title):	Stone King Adapted by Matthew Close, Senior Vice Principal
Target Audience:	Parents, pupils, staff
Review By Date:	August 2026
Date Issued:	September 2025



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

Appendix 1: Managing Attendance Concerns at Surbiton High School

- Pupils who are reported ill should be marked as such unless there are reasonable grounds to suspect the child is not ill. If this is the case the matter should be escalated to Matthew Close (Senior Vice Principal, Senior School)/Paula McIntyre (Head, Girls' Prep)/ Bryon King (Head, Boys' Prep).
- Only the Principal or Head of School (Preps) may pre-authorise absence.
- Medical Illness for more than 5 consecutive days must be accompanied by a doctor's note otherwise all absence in that period should be marked as unauthorised. The School Nurse may authorise such absence where it is felt appropriate to do so or she receives information from medical professionals.
- Where there is chronic illness or a child is supported by CAMHS, written confirmation from a medical professional that the illness justifies the level of absence must be obtained.
- Attendance is monitored weekly by Matthew Close/HOYS/Heads of Prep.

Concerns should be raised with parents when:

1. A pupil's attendance falls beneath 95% and
2. At least 5% absence is 'unauthorised' and /or
3. Chronic illness (including mental health concerns) is prolonged without written confirmation from a medical professional that the illness justifies the level of absence.

When the criteria above are met the following action will be taken:

- a. Parents are written to by MC or PM/BK stating that the School is concerned about the child's attendance and will be formally monitoring for a period of two weeks.
- b. Parents invited to meet with MC or PM/BK to identify barriers to attendance along with possible support on offer.
- c. Support to be offered by the School
 - i. Parent meeting in school
 - ii. Extra pastoral support via Tutor, HOY or Mentor
 - iii. Pupil offered chance to see School nurse / counsellor
- d. Note made on ISAMS
- e. HOY to discuss with RF/JO/PM/BK at weekly meeting

If a pupil's attendance does not improve during the monitoring period and there are a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions in the past 6-week period:

- a. Principal to be informed.
- b. A referral will be made to Children's Services by a member of the Safeguarding Team

Sponsored Students Attendance



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance for pupils, who are sponsored by the School under a CAS, is recorded in the same manner as all other pupils. However, the following additional checks are put in place:

- The group of staff involved in UKVI are emailed every day that the pupil is absent to inform them of the absence.
- This allows the relevant member of the team to follow up on illness accordingly.
- The relevant authorities will then be alerted to the absence of the pupil after ten consecutive expected contacts. This will be reported to the Home Office within ten working days of the trigger date.



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

Appendix 2: Registration Codes

Attending	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

Appendix 3: Further Information about Attendance and Absence Codes

Attending the School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present (/ \) if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

Our pupils must arrive by 8:25am each school day.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**Code L**) – which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code “Late after registers close” (**Code U**) which is an unauthorised absence mark.

However, if the pupil is arriving late due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. See DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/90123/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance.pdf) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk))

Attending a place other than the school

Pupils are marked as attending a place other than the school if they are present for the assigned session. These codes include:

- **Code K** Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- **Code V**: Attending an educational visit or trip
- **Code P**: Participating in a sporting activity
- **Code W**: Attending work experience
- **Code B**: Attending any other approved education activity
- **Code D**: Dual registered at another setting

Our School retains responsibility for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. Our school is satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupils. Our school ensures that we have in place arrangements whereby providers notify the School of any absence. Our School records the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school or Pupil Referral Unit for part or all of their education, our School will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider arranged by the school, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (any other approved educational activity).

The school expects the alternative provision (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow-up



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a **weekly** basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the Alternative Provision (AP).

Absent – Leave of absence

A leave of absence means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence' which means the pupil's absence is with permission granted by the school. These codes include:

- **Code C1:** Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- **Code M:** Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- **Code J1:** Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- **Code S:** Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- **Code X:** Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- **Code C2:** Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- **Code C:** Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The school will consider each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage, we will follow the necessary protocols.

All term-time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the Virtual School in relation to any requests for term-time absence for a child in care.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should try to make appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site to attend a medical appointment during the school day without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment. The school may request evidence of the appointment for our records.

Part-time timetables - Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

Absent – other authorised reasons

Absent due to other authorised reasons means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence'. These codes include:

- **Code T:** Parent travelling for occupational purposes



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

- **Code R:** Religious observance
- **Code I:** Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- **Code E:** Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

Mobile pupil - Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The school will authorise the absence of a mobile pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends.

In accordance with the law, the school will authorise **one day's absence** for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be necessary, they should be requested in advance using the leave of absence in term time process. Additional days taken without exceptional circumstances will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance '[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)' 2024¹ which states that if

¹ Please ask the school for a printed copy of Working Together to Improve School Attendance if required



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence, we will endeavour to have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

We ask that you notify the school during the first day by telephone or email.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Matthew Close, for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, no pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Suspensions (Exclusions)

In this policy, the word 'suspension' is used to refer to what legislation calls an exclusion for a fixed period. Suspensions and permanent exclusions are both types of exclusion, and where this policy uses the word 'exclusion' this includes both suspensions (fixed-period exclusions) and permanent exclusions.



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an exclusion. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions. The full behaviour and exclusions policy for our school can be found on the school website.

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the Principal.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

No pupil will be allowed to leave the School site without parental confirmation.

Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences and are not counted as possible attendances):

- **Code Q:** Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
- **Code Y1:** Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- **Code Y2:** Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- **Code Y3:** Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- **Code Y4:** Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- **Code Y5:** Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- **Code Y6:** Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- **Code Y7:** Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Absent - unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or no reason for absence was provided.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term-time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions. The unauthorised absence codes include:

- **Code G** – Holiday not granted by the school
- **Code N** – Reason for absence not yet established
- **Code O** – Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- **Code U** – Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative codes

Where necessary and applicable, our school will use the defined administrative codes. These codes are not collected for statistical purposes and are:

- **Code Z:** Prospective pupil not on admissions register
- **Code #:** Planned whole school closure