



Prior Heath Infant School
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Headteacher: Mrs Lindsey Chivers

3rd February 2026

Dear Parents,

School Attendance

The school staff, alongside the Local Authority and Department for Education, strongly believe that being in school every day that it is open is important for children's achievement, wellbeing and their wider development. To this end, we do all we can to encourage parents to ensure that the children in their care achieve our expectation of 100% attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon promptly. Please note that school attendance is monitored by the Local Authority and the Department for Education and children's attendance records are passed on to their next school.

Attendance Matters



Feedback from termly attendance meeting

The Local Authority have assigned a new Attendance Officer to us, Sue Jones, who visited school last week to review our current attendance data. A focus of the meeting was the children whose attendance is below 90%, who are regarded as Persistent Absentees. Whilst our overall attendance is good, Mrs Jones was concerned that an increasing number of children have fallen into the Persistent Absence category this term, particularly a number of children in Reception. Some of these children have been taken out of school for family holidays and Mrs Jones would like to remind parents that holidays should be taken during the school holiday dates. There has also been a higher than average amount of illness this term. Whilst we appreciate that there is generally more illness during the winter months and there have been a number of children who have had chickenpox recently, we would also like to take this opportunity to remind parents of the NHS Guidance "[Is my child too ill for school?](#)"

Current research shows that even quite low levels of absence can have a negative impact on achievement. The following chart provides a breakdown of the learning that is missed over the course of a year when children are absent from school:

% attendance in a school year	Days of absence in a school year	Weeks missed in a school year	Hours of learning missed in a school year
98%	4	Almost 1 week	20
95%	9.5	Almost 2 weeks	48
90%	19	Almost 4 weeks	95
85%	28.5	Almost 6 weeks	143

Punctuality

Punctuality is just as important. Arriving late at school can be very disruptive for your child, their teacher and the other children in the class. When a child is late, they miss essential learning at the beginning of lessons. In Reception and Year 1, the first lesson is always phonics. In Year 2, children are given an early morning task to complete. This task allows them to apply or practise key skills that they have previously learnt and as this work is often independent, it contributes towards teacher assessments. If these sessions are regularly missed, it will have an impact upon your child's progress.

Regularly being late for school reduces learning time as indicated below:

Minutes late every day	Total days missed each year	Hours of learning missed each year
5	3	15
15	20	50
30	19 days	95

It is equally important that children are collected at the end of the school day at 2.50pm, unless they are going to K Club or an after-school activity club. Teachers and office staff are very busy at the end of the day and dealing with children who have not been collected takes up valuable time.

Leave of Absence

A Leave of Absence request form, which is available from the school office, must be submitted **in advance** for any planned absence such as medical appointments. If you consider that there are exceptional circumstances relating to your request, please provide us with full details. Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school (absence without the agreement of the school or not covered by a medical note) and will be used by Surrey County Council in the following circumstances:

1. Pupils identified by police and Attendance Advice Officers (formerly Inclusion Officers) engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. Leave of absence in term time - 5 days or 10 sessions or more:
 - **Please be aware 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.**
 - The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.
 - In such cases the Headteacher/Governing Body must decide whether there are exceptional circumstances. They may request that Surrey County Council issue Penalty Notices when the absence is not authorised.

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

3. Finally, the issuing of 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, which may include a pupil arriving late after close of registration.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you act without delay to secure their regular attendance.

If you should have any questions or you have any concerns about your child's attendance, please don't hesitate to speak to your child's class teacher or contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lchivers'.

Mrs Lindsey Chivers
Headteacher