

October 2026

Dear Families,

Government Guidance: Important Information Regarding School Attendance and Punctuality

From 19th August 2024, the Government introduced updated guidance regarding school attendance. This legislation strengthens the importance of regular school attendance and introduces revised rules around penalty notices for unauthorised absences.

At Cranmere, we want to work in partnership with you to ensure every child attends regularly, as this is essential for their learning, progress, and wellbeing. If your child is experiencing difficulties with attendance or punctuality, please contact us as soon as possible so we can offer support.

Punctuality and Its Impact on Attendance Marks

Punctuality directly affects a child's official attendance record. Late arrivals not only disrupt the start of the learning day, but they can also count as unauthorised absences under statutory guidelines. Please note our daily morning schedule:

- **8:30am:** School doors open. Children may arrive anytime between 8:30am and 8:50am to settle smoothly into their classrooms.
- **8:50am:** Gates close promptly for morning registration.
- **8:50am – 9:20am:** Any child arriving between these times will receive a '**Late**' (**L**) mark on the register.
- **After 9:20am:** Morning registers officially close. Any arrival after 9:20am without prior notice (such as a confirmed medical appointment) will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence for the entire morning session (U code)**.

Because arrivals after 9:20am count as an unauthorised session, ongoing lateness can quickly cause a child's attendance percentage to drop and may contribute toward statutory intervention or penalty notices.

Requests for Absence

Headteachers are not permitted to authorise leave during term time. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and full details must be provided in writing.

When Penalty Notices May Be Issued

Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice where:

- A child has 5 or more days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence, which may include family holidays taken during term time.
- A pupil has 10 or more unauthorised sessions in the previous 10 school weeks (including late arrival after registers have closed at 9:20am).
- A child is found truanting during the school day.
- Parents fail to ensure their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during the first five days of an exclusion (under Section 103 Education and Inspections Act 2006).

Penalty Notice Charges

- **First offence within a rolling 3-year period:** £160 per parent/carer per child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days).

- **Second offence within the 3-year period:** £160 per parent/carer per child (no reduction).
- **Third offence within the 3-year period:** No further penalty notice will be issued. Instead, Surrey County Council will consider prosecution in the Magistrates Court under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will also result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings. Please note, Surrey County Council cannot withdraw a penalty notice without the written permission of the Headteacher.

Working Together

While this legislation is statutory and applies to all schools nationally, our priority remains to work with families to promote excellent attendance and punctuality. Please take this into account when considering time off during term time and planning your morning routines.

If you have any questions or require support, please contact the school office. Thank you for your continued support in ensuring that our pupils attend school regularly, arrive on time and benefit fully from their education.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Gilbert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Paul Gilbert
Headteacher