

## Attendance

### Persistent and severe absence

Any child with attendance of 90% or below (regardless of the reason for any absences) is considered to be a persistent absentee by the government. This equates to missing half a day of school every week. A child with attendance of 50% or below is considered a severe absentee.

### Do you know what your child's attendance percentage is?

If your child is persistently or severely absent, Stepgates Community School will organise a meeting to find out what could be causing the absences and what is needed to help make things better. This may result in the creation of an attendance contract or referrals to services such as Early Help and Preventative Services, who may be able to provide your family with additional support. If your child is absent for a number of days a welfare check will be carried out.

## Every day counts

### Punctuality

Arriving late to school is unsettling for your child and can be disruptive for their teacher and other children in the class. It is important your child arrives on time. If your child arrives late, this will be marked in the register. If your child arrives very late, this may be recorded as unauthorised absence for the whole morning.

There are 190 days in a school year, which leaves 175 days to spend on whatever you choose.



190 DAYS  
**100%**

Very best chance  
of success



183 DAYS  
**96%**

Off to a  
flying start



179 DAYS  
**94%**

Less chance  
of success



175 DAYS  
**92%**

Harder to  
make progress



**MORE THAN 19 DAYS' ABSENCE  
LESS THAN 90%**

Persistent absence, not good for your child



## Stepgates Community School

*Learning and Growing Together*  
Headteacher: Mrs Tara Ford

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS

*Stepgates, Chertsey,  
Surrey KT16 8HT*

*Tel: 01932 563022*

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS



### Your responsibility

You have a legal duty to ensure your child receives a regular education at school, which will help give them the best possible chance of success in life.

If your child is of compulsory school age and registered at a school, but absent without good reason, Stepgates Community School may choose not to authorise any of those days. This could result in Surrey County Council taking action against you for each child absent, including:

- A fine (penalty notice)\*
- Attendance Prosecution through the Magistrates' Courts which could lead to a fine of up to £1,000 or a parenting order being issued
- An Education Supervision Order (ESO) through the Family Courts.

\* Stepgates Community School will apply for Surrey County Council to issue a penalty notice to you if:

- Your child goes on holiday without the Headteacher's permission.
- Your child is absent or late without a suitable explanation, or none is provided.

You may receive a penalty of **£160** for each child's absence if paid within **28 days**, reduced to **£80** if paid within **21 days**.

If a second penalty is issued in a 3 year rolling period the fine is **£160** with no option to pay the reduced rate.

A third penalty cannot be issued in a rolling 3 year period and therefore you may face prosecution in the Magistrates' Court which could result in a maximum fine of **£1,000**.

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

### Attendance matters

#### Too ill to attend school?

Children can attend school with minor ailments (toothache, headache, stomach ache, cold, sore throat). If you are unsure how long your child should be absent with an illness, ask your child's GP, pharmacist or contact school for advice.

#### Medical appointments

All routine appointments should be booked outside school hours. If your child is absent for medical reasons, Stepgates Community School will ask to see 'medical evidence' (e.g. copy of a prescription, medicine packaging with a label or appointment card). If you are unable to provide this, Stepgates Community School will not authorise the absence.

#### Absence during term time

Your child must not be absent from school:

- For a family holiday / leaving school early for haircuts / dentists
- Seeing Father Christmas / taking the dog to the vet / weekend away
- Arriving late due to car problems / oversleeping
- No one being able to bring your child to school

Stepgates Community School will only authorise an absence in very exceptional circumstances.

### Reporting absences

It is a parent/carer's responsibility to notify Stepgates Community School with the reason if their child will be absent.

[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/backinto-school/resources-for-families/](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/backinto-school/resources-for-families/)

### What can parents do to ensure good attendance at school

Create good routines for mornings at home so that your child can arrive punctually and ensure they are properly equipped with the right uniform, Physical Education (PE) kit, school bag, pencil case, and books.

- Read all school communications
- Attend Parent-Teacher Consultation Evenings
- Encourage and show interest; discuss their day with them
- Check your child understands their homework and that it has been completed
- Contact Stepgates Community School if your child is worried about something, causing reluctance to go to school
- Set realistic boundaries and sanctions
- Let Stepgates Community School know the reason(s) for any absence and a likely return date, on the first day of the absence and update the school daily
- Make medical/dental appointments out of school time, whenever possible
- Do not take holidays during term time