

Attendance Policy

SPRINGWOOD HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction and Statutory Framework:

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Springwood Heath Primary School places a high priority on achieving standards and we feel that excellent pupil attendance and punctuality is essential. In order for children to achieve their potential, they must be highly motivated to learn and keen and eager to attend school.

Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them at Springwood Heath Primary School. We fully recognise our responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for a maximum number of days and hours. Our partnership with parents play a vital role in ensuring this is achieved.

In line with the 1996 Education Act, we expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. It is a legal requirement that all children attend school for 190 days. The Government expect Springwood Heath Primary School to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absences.
- Ensure every child has access to full-time education, to which they are entitled; and
- act early to address patterns of absence.

We recognise that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school life and to share and support their children's learning. Through our home –school agreement, parents agree to ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance.

School life:

School education lays the foundations of a child's life. Research demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents, carers and school staff should work in partnership in making educational success and ensuring that all children have a full and equal access to all that school has to offer. As a school we will encourage parents/carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that difficulties that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. It is the responsibility of our parents/carers to ensure that their child arrives at school and returns home safely.

Springwood Heath Primary is a successful school and as parents you and your child/children play a part in making it so. Any absence affects your child's learning and the more they miss the harder it is for them to catch up. Research has shown that for every percentage point of absence, attainment is significantly lower. This is why as a school we are concerned if your child's attendance is less than **95%**.

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks.

90% equates to a day off every two weeks.

85% equates to one and a half days off every two weeks.

80% equates to one whole day off every week.

Or:

Less than 5 days absence = 98% 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% If a child achieves 80% attendance this means they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year.

Or:

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.			

Even the brightest and most enthusiastic learner will find it hard to keep up with their work with these levels of absence. That is why we encourage the highest attendance possible.

It is important that classes at Springwood Heath make a prompt and effective start of the school day. Lateness into school causes disruption to the individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class.

Expectations:

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day;
- Attend school punctually;
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day (i.e. PE Kit/Swimming Kit)

We expect that parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- Ensure that they contact the school daily of any absence, before 9:30am.
- Notify school in writing detailing the reason for absence and period of time on the first day back after absence.
- Send copies of hospital/doctor appointment letters and letters detailing time spent in hospital.
- Notify school immediately of any changes to emergency contact details.
- Notify school of who can pick up their child in the case of parent/carers being delayed or unable to pick up their child.
- Support and encourage their child by attending Parents Evening and other school events.
- Contact school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.

- Work in partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality; monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality;
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of rewards and recognition;
- Inform parents of the attendance of all pupils;
- Inform parents/carers via a series of letters and meetings regarding their child's punctuality and poor attendance.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness:

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is therefore paramount that all children arrive at school on time.

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily – once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.

All children should be in the school playground at **8:50am** ready to come into school at **8:55am**. There is no supervision on the playground before 8:50am therefore parents/carers are requested to maintain supervision of their child/children until school staff are on the playground.

The bell will ring at **8:55am**, classroom doors will be opened and by this time the children should have said their goodbyes and begin entering their classrooms. The register will be taken at **9:00am**; the register in the classroom will then be closed.

The registers are then returned to the school office by **9:10am**.

A child arriving after **9:00am** but before **9:30am** will arrive in school through the main reception entrance. The child will then receive an L code which means the child has received a late mark for that session but is present.

(DfE guidance suggests registers remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes)

However children arriving after **9:30am** will be registered with a U code, showing they are present in school but were late enough to affect their learning. This code equates to an unauthorised absence for that session and will affect the child's annual attendance.

The afternoon registration period is at **1:00pm (FS & KS1)** and **1:10pm (KS2)**.

Unreported absence:

If there is no known reason for a child's absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided then the absence will be coded as 0 (unauthorised absence)

This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and or legal proceedings. Some examples are provided below:

- Parents/Carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell

First Day Absence Contact:

If a child is absent from school and the school has not been notified of the child's absence we will send a text message between 9:30 – 10:00am on the day of absence.

Second Day Absence Contact

If the child is still absent on the second day without contact from the family, a telephone call will be made to the home or the family's place of work.

Continuing Absence Procedures

In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit will be made. Any child who is absent without explanation for 8 consecutive school days (85%), who has a pattern of erratic attendance (85%) or persistent lateness after registers close may be referred to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer in order that further investigations can be made. Such cases will be allocated to the Schools Education Welfare Officer who will visit the home, set targets for improvement, signpost resources of support if needed, and ultimately recommend court action if there is no improvement.

In some circumstances a home visit will be made on the First Day of Absence to determine the whereabouts and safety of the child.

Other reasons for absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

From time to time children need to be absent from school for other reasons such as medical/dentist appointments.

Such absences should only **take up part of the school day**.

School should be informed of such absences in writing and/or copy of the appointment sent into school. The child should be brought back to school after the appointment.

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9:00am will have their absence recorded as a medical absence. (Attendance code M)

School reserves the right to not authorise absences for illness after five days if sufficient evidence is not provided.

Absence notes received from parents/carers will be kept by the school office for the remainder of the academic year and archived after that.

If a child is persistently late the school Attendance Officer and/or School Mentor in liaison with the Education Welfare Officer will arrange to meet the family.

Reluctant attenders/school refusal:

You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend school. However if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work or an upset with a peer, please discuss this with school at the earliest opportunity and we will do everything possible to sort the difficulty out. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make matters worse.

Persistent Absenteeism:

The definition of persistently absent (PA) as set by the DfE for 2015/16 is a pupil with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance) – 'A guide to absence statistics updated October 2017'.

Absence at this level causes considerable damage to a child's education and we need parent's fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

Regular trawls of the registers are made to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence, that is to say absence of 10% or more in a half term. The school's Attendance Officer and School Receptionist will be responsible for identification of any emerging concerns and putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially school will try to resolve the difficulty with the parent/carer but if the pattern continues then school will request the support of the Schools Education Welfare Officer.

In considering attendance levels, the register is of paramount importance. Registers are legal documents. Should parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to keeping the registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

Non school attendance in Term Time:

The Department of Education has from 1st September 2013 - Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, announced that parents have no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time.

Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional before they can warrant the granting of leave. Exceptional circumstances being defined as being unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.

However, Head Teachers are not expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent.

Any leave taken during term time for the following reasons will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

- Availability of cheaper holidays.
- Availability of desired accommodation.
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays.
- Overlap with beginning or end of term.
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake.
- Booked by another family member.
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family.
- Family birthdays.

The Local Council can use various legal powers if your child is missing from education without good reason. They can give you:

- **A Parenting Order.** This means you will have to attend parenting classes.
- **An Education Supervision Order.** If the council thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you're not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to help you get your child into education. The local council can do this instead of prosecuting you, or as well.
- **A School Attendance Order.** You'll get a School Attendance Order if the local council thinks your child isn't getting an education. You have 15 days to provide evidence that you've registered your child with the school listed in the order or that you're giving them home education. If you don't, you could be prosecuted or given a fine.
- **A Penalty Notice.** The local council can give you a fine of £60, which rises to £120 if you don't pay within 21 days. If you don't pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.

If you are **Prosecuted** You could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court also gives you a Parenting Order.

Attendance Percentages:

These are worked out as follows:

- 99%-100% Excellent
- 97%-98% Very Good
- 96%-97% Good
- 94%-95% Developing
- 92%-94% Poor
- 92% or below Unacceptable

Absence for Religious Reasons:

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of three days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member and this will be marked 'R' in the register.

If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply. (This would be marked in the register as a 'C').

Approved Educational Activity:

Children who are educated off site, dual registered or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means for statistical purposes the children will be counted as present. The nature of the activity must however, be recorded by use of the appropriate code:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Additional codes used when children are not in school:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

Further Codes can be found in the DfE School Attendance Guidance – November 2016.

Children who cease to attend without prior notification (CME):

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow school Safeguarding procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future. (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 and Children Missing in Education updated September 2016)

It is essential that staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

All children regardless of their circumstances are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

School procedures:

Days 1-5 – Schools should make all investigations to determine the whereabouts or reasons for absence from school.

Days 6-19 - Where a pupil has been missing for 5 school days, the school should contact the Education Welfare Service. A missing pupils' checklist should be completed by the school.

Day 20 - Where a pupil remains missing from school/education provision, review the situation with the Education Welfare Service. If all enquires have been completed by the school/education provider and the Education Welfare Service, and the child is still untraced, a CME referral form should be completed by the school and in agreement with the Education Welfare Service, pupils may be removed from the roll once all the following have been completed.

Non-starters:

Pupils who are allocated places at Springwood Heath Primary but fail to start are also treated as CME. If we have been unable to make contact with the family during a ten day period after their expected arrival, they will be referred to the Local Authority CME team for further checks.

Vulnerable Children:

Children who are Looked After (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) or Children in Need (CIN) will be treated with highest priority and will be known to our Attendance Officer/Learning Mentor. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home or a home visit. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

Elective Home Educated Children:

On receipt of written notification to home educate, schools must inform the pupil's local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. Schools should not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record. Schools and local authorities should not seek to prevent parents from educating their children outside the school system.

There is no requirement for parents to obtain the school or local authority's agreement to educate their child at home.

Deletions of pupil from the admission register:

Schools must notify the local authority when they remove a pupil from roll with the Removing Pupils from Roll: Guidance for Schools.

All schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. elective home education (HLE)
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing compulsory school age, and neither

he/she nor his/her parents have indicated the intention to continue to attend school after ceasing to be compulsory age.

- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to school at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.

Education Welfare Officer:

The Education Welfare Officer visits school once a month to check and monitor attendance. They carry out regular checks to identify children with low attendance (below 85%) and works with school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

Reporting Attendance Statistics/Data Analysis:

The school collects and stores attendance data using the management information systems (SIMS) The school provides attendance data to the DfE using SIMs to send data about the school census. The figures returned are then published by the DfE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

We use our attendance data to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils. Where attendance is a concern we will use data to analyse attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example SEND, ethnicity or gender and how low attendance impacts on attainment and progress.

Attendance is monitored every week and any concerns highlighted during this process are reported to the Headteacher.

Two weeks before every half term a report of pupils falling below 95% target will be run. Those with valid reasons for absence such as hospitalisation and notified illness will be noted. Those pupils identified as not having any valid reasons will be reported to the Headteacher for further appropriate action which will include a meeting with the Schools Attendance Officer/Learning Mentor and/or Education Welfare Officer.

Procedures for reporting attendance percentage/sessions to parents:

At the end of every school term children who have achieved 95% attendance or above will receive a school certificate during each end of term assembly.

Celebrating Achievements:

All children achieving 100% attendance at the end of the academic year will be rewarded for their valuable efforts. They will each receive a certificate and a book voucher presented at the end of year assembly from our Parents Association.