



**embrace
challenge:
expect
excellence**

Springfield Primary School



Attendance Policy 2019 - 20

Approved by: C. Andrews/D Gibbons

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Springfield Primary School strives to achieve outstanding attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality. This is to ensure that all pupils can take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them. Persistent absence and lateness can have a significant bearing on your child's progress and achievement as well as self-esteem and confidence. We believe strong relationships with parents and positive work with parents help ensure the highest attendance is achieved. It is our duty to promote 100% attendance for all children. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that our pupils are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. All children have the right to an education and we have put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:45 on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 09:00 and will be kept open until 09:30. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 13:30 for EYFS and KS1 and the register for the afternoon session will be taken at 13:30 and will be kept open until 14:00 for KS2.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 09:00 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

On the first day of absence parents are required to notify us by calling on **01234 306000** or through the **ParentMail** app you have the option to notify absence, either of these methods are acceptable and must be done by 09:00.

If the child is off for longer than one day we ask for daily updates on the child by 9:00 each day.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Please provide information about these appointments by using ParentMail and the Notify Absence option, calling us on 01234 306000 or in person to the school office.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

If we identify a pattern in lateness or punctuality we will offer support where appropriate, before notifying the Education Welfare Office of our concern.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

When you have not reported an absence we will call emergency contacts in order of priority to ascertain a reason for the absence. If we are unable to contact you by 10:30 if we have a concern over the welfare of the child we will come to your address to speak directly to you and the child. If we are still unable to ascertain a reason for the absence we will follow the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019.

3.6 Reporting to parents

The school share the attendance percentage with parents at each parents' consultation meeting and more frequently where there are concerns. The attendance information is also shared with parents in the end of year reports. Class attendance is shared with the pupils on a weekly basis.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

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

Each Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Weekly during our awards assembly we will celebrate each class who achieve 100% attendance by awarding them with £5, then as a class they can decide to save these up over time or cash them in immediately for an agreed reward.

If a class has had 100% attendance for the week, the class will receive 5 whole class Dojos (our school reward system).

At our end of term awards assembly we will reward all children with 100% or most improved attendance with a certificate and memento of their achievement.

We will work with all our parents/families to support regular attendance – for example, through communicating early about issues/concerns, acknowledging positive improvements, indicating a named contact in school, etc.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If the child is off for longer than one day we ask for daily updates on the child by 9:00 each day.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

We collect and store attendance data on our Management Information System and how it may be used for internal purposes – for example, to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

The attendance records are checked every day and a data report is prepared on a weekly basis.

- Where it is noted that attendance has dropped below the school's target of 96%, the parent/carer will receive a phone call.
- If attendance drops below 96%, the parent/carer will receive a 'First Stage' letter which will include an invitation to a meeting where the matter can be discussed and resolved in person. During this meeting, the school will seek to assist with any issues that are affecting attendance and will set targets for improved attendance.

- A review meeting will be set for 6 weeks after the first attendance meeting.
- If attendance improves (ie moves above the 96% mark), the pupil will be sent a letter home.
- If attendance does not improve, or continues to drop, parents/ carers will be sent a 'Second Stage' letter. At this point, the school will consider implementing a fine. This will be done on a case by case basis.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents and monitor ParentMail records about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the attendance officer. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day