

# Pupil Attendance Policy

Date: November 2022

Review Date: November 2023

## Policy Scope and Accountability

- Staff, governors, parents and the wider school community should have regard to this policy.
- Accountability for leading administering, implementing and reviewing policy rests with the school leadership.
- Accountability for performing as policy requires rests with all staffs.

## Introduction

At Springhead School we aim to provide an inclusive education for all children and young people. This can only be done if pupils attend school regularly. We take a whole school approach to attendance. Without regular attendance we cannot provide the opportunities for pupils to receive opportunities to access new skills and knowledge or have regular opportunities for practice and repetition to embed these skills. We support the notion of 'Attend to Attain'.

## Aims

The purpose of this document is to inform parents and others of:

1. The law regarding pupil attendance and the requirements placed upon schools.
2. The school procedures for the reporting of absence and clarification of authorised and unauthorised absences.
3. School will seek to make use of all available opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance with both parents and pupils.
4. To ensure that we inform others of the links between attendance concerns, child protection, safeguarding and Prevent Duties.

## Definitions

- **Authorised absences** are those agreed by the school with parents **beforehand**, or where a telephone call or a letter of explanation has been received on return to school. By law, only the school can approve absence where there is an explanation or that is justified. Examples of these can be found in Appendix 1.
- **Unauthorised absences** are those for which there has been no explanation or which the school regards as unjustified.
- Registers are kept open until 9.30am. Children or young people arriving in school after this time will receive a **late mark**. Any pupil arriving in school later than 10am without a good reason, will receive an unauthorised **absence mark**.

## Policy

- At Springhead School, we will have regard to the statutory requirements and local and national guidance on attendance. This supports learners in achieving their potential and provides a good foundation for their future education and potential employment. It also ensures pupils are kept safe. We have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance for everyone in our school.
- The law states that parents of registered pupils of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to send their children to school regularly, and risk prosecution if they fail in this duty.
- It is required by law that schools keep accurate registers of pupils' attendance. The Department for Education also requires schools to publish attendance figures. These have to be split into authorised and unauthorised absences. **See definitions.**

- Head teachers cannot grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time without "exceptional circumstances".
- Parents believing, they have an 'exceptional circumstance request' for time off in term time, please request a form from school and complete it prior to taking the time off.
- Where the time off school is deemed **unauthorised absence**, parents can be fined or prosecuted by the Local Authority. The decision to prosecute or seek a fine rests solely with the local authority, not the school.

## Definitions

### Authorised Absence

- Where a pupil is absent due to sickness and is genuinely unable to attend school, then the school, **after being informed by the parent/carer**, may **authorise** a child or young person's absence.
- In law, only a Headteacher can authorise a pupil's absence. They may require additional evidence such as a letter from your GP or other medical proof if your child or young person's attendance is already a concern

### Unauthorised Absence.

- The law states that parent/carer(s) must ensure that their child or young person regularly attends the school where they are registered. Should they fail to attend school regularly legal action may be taken against you.
- Under the terms of the education related provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, each parent/carer(s) may be issued with a Penalty Notice of £60 if:
  - You fail to ensure that your child or young person attends school regularly
  - You allow your child or young person to take leave of absence in term time without a school's authorisation
  - You fail to return your child or young person to school on an agreed date after a leave of absence
  - Your child or young person persistently arrives late for school after the register is closed

## Roles and Responsibilities

### The School will

- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them and make reasonable adjustments.
- Take into account individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.
- Keep an accurate register of attendance and report on attendance as required.
- Contact families if the school has not received a reason for a child or young person's absence, this is usually on the first day of their absence where no reason has been given. It is our duty to ensure your child or young person is safe.
- Celebrate good attendance at the end of each term for pupils.
- Monitor all attendance and may ask parents/carers of pupils with persistent absence to attend an attendance hearing in school. If we cannot make contact with you then you may receive a home visit from a member of staff.
- Contact the appropriate authorities if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

### The Headteacher will

- Review all absence in term time requests
- Decide whether to authorise an absence
- Ensure that absence codes are entered on the school register.

## Our Attendance Lead will

- Monitor attendance and identify those who need support with attendance. Use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports and facilitate discussions.
- Benchmark our attendance data
- Support discussions with families

## Parents and Carers will for

### Absence

- Be responsible to inform schools of the reason for a child or young person's absence as soon as possible. **This is expected to be on the first day of absence.** A written note, a note in the home/school diary, a telephone call or a message via home/school transport are all acceptable.
- Not take their child or young person out of school unless it is an exceptional circumstance. All avoidable appointments that can be taken in school holidays should be organized for these times.

### Lateness

- Inform school if they know that their child or young person will arrive at school late in known circumstances e.g. hospital appointment.
- Ensure that their child or young person is ready to come to school on time.  
The majority of pupils are brought to Springhead School by the School Transport Service provided by the local authority. It is the responsibility of parents to have their child or young person ready when transport arrives. If the child or young person is not ready, parents should make their own arrangements to bring them to school or the absence will be classed as **unauthorised. In these circumstances parents must also ensure that suitable arrangements to transport their child home at the end of the school day.**
- Report to the office when you arrive in school late. ***It is essential for us to know who is physically present in the building for purposes of emergency evacuation.***

## Working together to improve attendance

We encourage all partners to work together to:

### Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritizing attendance improvement across the school.

### Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

### Listen and Understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

### Facilitate Support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

### Formalise Support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, we will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable

families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalizing support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

### **Enforce**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

All attendance information is recorded in paper registers by class staff and then transferred by office staff to SIMS (System Information Management System) This information is shared with the LA and used to monitor a pupil's attendance.

### **Poor attendance or unauthorized absence or persistent lateness can result in parents**

- being asked to attend an Attendance Review meeting at school
- having Educational Social Worker involvement
- and/or being fined.
- having action taken against them for educational neglect.

The school has regular attendance and safeguarding meetings with other professionals where attendance information is reported.

Attendance Information is also reported as part of an EHCP review and at the end of year in End of Year reports where the following year's target is also recorded.

Governors will get regular updates on whole school attendance.

### **Links**

*Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*

*Prevent Policy*

*Staff Absence Management*

### **Other Documents**

*Working together to improve Attendance 2022*

**The Governors thank parents in anticipation of their co-operation in adhering to these procedures.**

# Appendix 1

## Authorised Absences

### **Illness, medical and dental appointments**

- In the event of illness parents should contact school **on the first day of absence** by telephone, written note or a message via home/school transport. We encourage parents and carers to ring school to talk to us.
- Leave for medical or dental appointments will be given where confirmation has been received from the parent either in person, in writing, by telephone call or on production of an appointment card/letter.
- ***Please report to the office if your child arrives after registration or leaves school during the day. It is essential for us to know who is physically present in the building for purposes or emergency evacuation.***

### **Special Occasions and exceptional circumstances**

- Wherever possible we strongly advise parents to avoid taking children out of school during term time. Children cannot access the curriculum if they are absent from school.
- Only **exceptional** occasions would be granted authorisation of absence. The Headteacher will be pleased to discuss individual requests for absence with parents **in advance**.

## Unauthorised Absences

- These are absences for which the school has received no explanation or an unsatisfactory explanation, e.g, shopping trips within school hours.
- Where a child or young person is absent and school have received no explanation, a letter will be sent home requesting a reason for absence. This should then be returned to school for authorisation.
- Parents will be sent a copy of a letter with the Headteachers decision

## Appendix 2

### New Attendance codes

Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
<b>B</b>	Education off site (not Dual reg.)	AEA	Out for whole session
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised circumstances. Leave of absence granted by school	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (attending other establishment)	AEA	Out for whole session
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (no agreed or days in excess)	Unauthorised absence	Out for whole session
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical/dental appointments)	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
<b>J</b>	Interview	AEA	Out for whole session
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	Out for whole session
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised Abs (not covered by other code)	Unauthorised absence	Out for whole session
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	AEA	Out for whole session
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
<b>U</b>	Late (after register closes)	Unauthorised absence	Late for session
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	AEA	Out for whole session
<b>W</b>	Work experience	AEA	Out for whole session
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (Enforced closure)	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils and staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session

**AEA is Approved Educational Activity**