

Springfields First School ATTENDANCE POLICY

Principles

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school and any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

The attendance and behaviour policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child, or have general concerns about the absence, to the Early Help Team.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- **parents keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- **truancy before or during the school day**
- **absences which have never been properly explained**
- **children who arrive at school too late to get a mark i.e. after 9.30a.m and 1.30pm**

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Early Help Team. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, the Local Authority can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or three months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Early Help Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

When an individual pupil's attendance level **falls below 90%** in any term without good reason, a referral to the Early Help Team will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996, section 444. (Appendix 1)

Amendments have been made to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 in the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.

The amendments make clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. All requests for leave during term time must be made to the Head teacher in writing, outlining the dates and reasons for the request. These will be considered on an individual basis and a written response provided to parents.

Responsibilities.

Parents

- To make sure that their son/daughter attends school punctually, regularly and full-time.
- To contact the school by telephone or in writing to explain each absence of a pupil. School will contact parents on the first day of absence if we have not been advised why children are absent
- To request, in writing, permission for a pupil to miss school for a medical appointment
- To assist the school in securing good attendance
- To request permission in advance in writing for a pupil to miss school for special circumstances
- Not to request a pupils absence for holiday during the Statutory Assessment period

Teachers

- To complete the school register in accordance with statutory requirements.
- To classify a pupil absence as authorised or unauthorised as set out in the school guidance
- To inform the Headteacher when patterns of lateness or attendance are giving cause for concern

Organisation

- Registers will be completed morning and afternoon in accordance with the guidelines in the front of the register. Registration will be at 9.00a.m. in the morning and registers will close at 9.30a.m.. Registration in the afternoon will be at 1.05p.m. and registers will close at 1.30p.m.
- Absences will be categorised in accordance with guidelines on the class registration sheet

Monitoring

- Patterns of lateness and attendance will be monitored by the office staff and Headteacher.
- Patterns of attendance will be regularly reviewed by the school and reported to Governors in the Headteacher's Report to Governors.
- The written annual report to parents will include information regarding attendance for the year and the number of authorised/unauthorised absences.

Attendance targets and Special Projects:

The attendance target for this school has been set by the Local Authority and is **96%**.

Children achieving 100% attendance during each term will receive a Certificate of Attendance, each month the class with the best attendance is celebrated. Children achieving 100% for the whole school year will receive a Certificate of Attendance and an individual prize. These will be presented during Leavers Assembly at the end of the summer term.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- **Mrs N Harris, Office Manager and Mrs A Bagnall, Headteacher**

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. (Refer also to the school's Behaviour Policy)

Alison Bagnall

March 2021

Next review: March 2023

Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **complete the attached form and send it to the head teacher**. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
2. The Department for Education makes it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children receive the best education and prospects, that they should be in school during term time.
5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
 - frequency of similar requests
 - whether the parent made the request in advance
 - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
6. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The head teacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However head teachers may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
7. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
8. Should the school decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 **per parent* per child**. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.
9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers in challenging parents who ignore the law.

* Generally the DfE states that parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

Request for leave during term time (TEMPLATE LETTER)

To: The head teacher of:..... (School) Date.....

I request a leave of absence from school during term time for:

my child (full name)

for the period from (date) to (date)

The **exceptional** circumstances and reason for this request are: -

.....
.....
.....

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s))School(s) attended

.....
.....

(Signature of 1st parent/carer(s) Print Name.....

(Signature of 2nd parent/carer(s) Print Name.....

Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

For Office Use Only

Current Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time(this academic year)

Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Rationale to decline request :

SignedHead teacher . Date

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent/carer.....

Changes to Penalty Notices for Absence from School

APPENDIX 2

Ensuring your child has access to a good education is very important to us.

A key part of this is for all children and young people to regularly attend school, as this gives each learner the best chance to achieve their full potential. In light of the recent Isle of Wight court case and the subsequent Supreme Court ruling on school absences, we wanted to clarify our position for parents where there may be the potential for any ambiguity and to also ensure we are fully compliant with legal requirements.

As a result, we have made a few changes to our previous guidance to schools, parents and carers regarding absence from school. The new guidance will come into force from **1 January 2018** and is detailed below:

Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time

From 1 January 2018 **any** period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. Your head teacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by your head teacher to the local authority.

Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. **This has now changed to 10 marks**, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are therefore encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

These changes have been agreed with local head teachers and have been implemented to help promote and support good attendance to school. Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education. The vast majority of children and young people in Staffordshire have an excellent record of school attendance, and we recognise the efforts of so many parents to ensure their children attend school regularly.

The Local Authority will continue to take appropriate action for absences during term time when we are notified by head teachers, both to support them in their role and to ensure local children can continue to achieve the best possible outcomes from attending local schools.

COVID-19 amendment

The school start and finish times are staggered per Key Stage group, to minimise the amount of human traffic on site - 8.30am-9.00am start and 3.00pm-3.30pm finish times and to ensure that the social distancing rules in place are adhered to.

Entrust Education Technologies SIMs team, in consultation with the DfE, introduced a range of new codes and subcodes to enable schools to record additional information regarding a pupil's absence. All the guidelines are followed by the school at all times.

The Headteacher reports the numbers to the LA on a daily basis according to the reporting requirements.