

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Updated January 2020

Introduction

At Springwell Learning Community, we regard regular attendance as absolutely essential to ensuring the best possible outcomes for our pupils. There is a clear link between good attendance and high standards and the development of well-rounded, confident individuals. For our pupils to be safe and fulfil their potential it is vital that they attend regularly and are on time, every day. Missing one day per week equals one year of school missed over the course of five years. This absence reduces the likelihood of a pupil achieving their potential to just 20%.

For this reason we encourage all pupils to feel that their presence is valued and that they are missed when they are absent or late. This policy sets out the procedures through which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality and, as a consequence, raise levels of achievement. This policy is written with due regard for the legal powers and duties included in the following:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010; and
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

Roles and responsibilities

Promoting regular attendance and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of everyone; however, the day-to-day roles of specific individuals may differ. To promote good attendance, the Senior Leadership Team will:

- Continuously monitor whole school and individual attendance
- Set and monitor attendance targets
- Implement systems of rewards and sanctions
- Report to staff and parents on issues related to attendance and punctuality
- Provide regular updates on how attendance can be improved
- Report on attendance to the Governing Body
- Give attendance a high profile at assemblies, school events and in the school newsletter
- Oversee administration of the SchoolPod system
- Work closely with the school's Pastoral team to monitor, support, challenge and improve overall, group and individual attendance
- Oversee the case-management of the school's Persistent Absentees
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Provide support, leadership and guidance to the Pastoral Team and relevant staff members
- Ensure that accurate records are maintained to support strong and effective case-work

To support good attendance the Pastoral Team will:

- Ensure registers are accurately marked
- Coordinate phone calls home when pupils do not arrive at school (Alternative Academy staff make phone calls from 8:30 to support pupils to be up and ready for learning)
- Make sure the reasons for absence are appropriately recorded and challenged
- Ask families if pupils are able to return at school at lunchtime when they are unwell in the morning
- Ask challenging questions when patterns of absence start to form or answers are unsatisfactory
- Conduct home visits from day one when reasons for absence are unclear
- Follow the school's Absence Process and identify pupils with attendance under 95%
- Meet with parents to discuss attendance problems as soon as they are identified
- Offer an early help assessment to families to support with attendance
- Provide support to parents who are struggling to get their children into school
- Inform the Local Authority if unacceptable attendance does not improve

To support good attendance all staff will:

- Deliver an innovative and creative curriculum that engages learners and encourages them to attend
- Go to great lengths to support the attendance of all learners
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, assemblies, certificates and prizes
- Run promotional events where parents, learners and staff can work together to help raise attendance levels across the school
- Assist the pastoral team with appropriate contact with home
- Be a good role model for learners

To support good attendance, parents and carers will:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- Ensure that children are up and ready for school
- Ensure transported children get into their taxis or pupils leave the house on time to walk to school or get public transport
- Provide an explanation for their child's absence from school in the morning on the first day of absence
- Not take children out of school in term time
- Notify the school as soon as problems arise with a child's attendance
- Arrange routine dental and medical appointments outside of school time

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive efficient full time education.

To promote good attendance pupils will:

- Attend school punctually and regularly
- Adhere to the school's values
- Hand in any letters of absence or requests for known absence to the school (including pre-arranged medical appointments)
- Not take holidays in school time

The Admission and Attendance Registers

The law requires our school to have both an admissions register and an attendance register. All of our pupils are placed on both registers. The admissions register contains the personal details of every pupils in the school, along with the date of admission and, where relevant, re-admission to the school. Pupils are entered into the admissions register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which they attend the school. Every amendment to the either register includes the original entry, the amended entry, the reason or the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made and the name and position of the person who made the amendment – this is done electronically. Every entry and is preserved for a period of three years.

Registers

Class teachers take the attendance register at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion they record whether every pupil is present. Absences are followed up by the pastoral team or group staff to ascertain the reason, ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken if necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's register. Codes are used in accordance with DfE guidance. Examples of authorised absence include proven illness and medical emergencies. Examples of unauthorised absences include refusal, absences for shopping and birthdays, day trips and holidays. Unauthorised absences can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings to help improve a child's attendance.

Persistent Absenteeism

Pupils who miss 10% or more schooling across the year **for whatever reason** are regarded as Persistent Absentees (PA). Absence at this level does considerable damage to a pupil's educational prospects and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. PA pupils are closely tracked and monitored. All our PA pupils and their parents are invited to meet with the pastoral team who may offer support and will set clear targets and expectations. PA will also be reported to the Local Authority.

Absence Procedures for Parents

If a pupil is absent parents/carers must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Speak to the relevant pastoral team member to provide more detailed information and ask for support if required
- Provide Medical Evidence for all unavoidable appointments and procedures

Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking young people away in term time. The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. Indeed, from September 2013, if parents/carers take their child out of school on a holiday, or for any reason other than illness, which has not been authorised by the Principal, they may be fined £60.00 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120.00 if paid within 23 days. This is per parent, per child. Alternatively, the Local Authority may take legal action against parents/carers for the non-attendance of a child where they have taken multiple leave of absences. On these occasions the maximum penalty for an offence is £2500. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parenting Contracts, Orders and Penalty Notices

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff to resolve any attendance problems. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority. The school will always try to work with parents/carers to resolve attendance problems, but if this is unsuccessful the Local Authority may use legal action, such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Local authorities and schools have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. Full details of the legal options are available from the school or the Local Authority.

First day absence	Phone call home by Group or Pastoral Staff / Home visit
95-100% attendance	Positive letter sent home half termly
90-95% Attendance	Letter home / Parental interview / Action plan and set targets
Below 90% Attendance	Letter home / Parental meeting / Pastoral team involvement / Use of action plan / Parenting contract / Warning letter / Fixed penalty notice

Attendance Rewards

Attendance will be celebrated throughout the year during assemblies and pupils will be rewarded with certificates. The class in each Key Stage and the Alternative Academy with the highest attendance overall for each half term will receive a Nurture Meal in celebration.

All pupils who achieve above 98% attendance for 1 full term will be entered into a prize draw for an additional reward in assembly.

Each pupil who achieves 100% attendance will also receive additional Dojo points.

Pupils in the Alternative Academies may have personalised targets in order to be entitled to receive rewards.

Class teachers will ensure that they have clear and engaging attendance displays in classrooms promoting the appropriate attendance rewards and which highlight pupils' current levels of attendance.

Children at Risk of Missing Education (CME)

All pupils at risk of CME are reported to the Local Authority in line with relevant guidance within agreed timescales.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Senior Leadership Team and specifically the Pastoral Manager will ensure that all staff take responsibility for implementing this policy and associated guidance. Overall responsibility for this policy rests with the Principal.