

# **Springfield Infant School and Nursery** **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**



**September 2023**

*Springfield is a Rights Respecting School.*

Article 3- The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children.

Article 12 – Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters.

Article 29 – Every child has the right to develop their personality, talents and abilities.

*This policy has been updated in line with the DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance' Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' May 2022*

## Overall Aims of this Policy:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved (95+%), through a meaningful and exciting curriculum, shared clear expectations with parent/carers, and by challenging persistence and regular absences.
- To raise standards and ensure every child achieves well through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parent/carers, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify and challenge causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them. These include the Virtual School, Social Workers and the pupil Entitlement Team at West Sussex

## The law on school attendance says (1.9- 12)

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- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have
- It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at school
- If registered at a school, then parents have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends regularly,

Springfield Infant School and Nursery believe that:

- All children have an entitlement to regular school attendance
- Good attendance means that your child will be able to get the most out of school and make the most of the opportunities offered to them.
- Being punctual is a skill that your child will need for life. It shows respect for others and that school is important.
- Being at school will ensure that there are no gaps in their learning. This will mean that the important foundations for future learning will be strong.
- Good attendance is the responsibility of the parents
- Regular attendance is an essential element of pastoral care
- An agreed understanding of the categories of absence is essential for parents, governors and teachers
- Attendance procedures should be based on legal requirements
- Consistency of practice should be pursued across the school
- Parentally condoned absence is not acceptable and is detrimental to the children's education.
- Children spend a small percentage of time at school. There are 175 days in the year for holidays and other activities. Please make every effort to book holidays and visit friends and family in this time only. It is important for your child to be at school the other days so that they can achieve and attain well.
- Schools and local authorities should work together to support parents rather than rely on FPN's.

**It is the role of the Parent/Carer to:**

- Set good patterns of regular attendance and punctuality for their child from the time he/she starts school
- Keep school informed if their child has to be absent for a genuine reason such as illness. Contact the school on the first day of absence so that staff know their child is safe
- When exceptional circumstances exist, to apply for leave of absence using a withdrawal of learning form. in advance where possible
- Avoid taking holidays in term time wherever possible
- Contact the school, in confidence, whenever problems occur which may keep children away from school.
- Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach-aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If pupils have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils should be brought back to school after appointments. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.
- Medical and dental appointments should not be arranged in school time wherever possible.
- We require parent/carers to work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.
- To organise and book holidays during the 175 days of school holidays and non-school days and not during the 190 days of learning time.

### Leave from Learning

Parent/carers are reminded that all absences mean that a child will miss out on learning and teaching, and they are, therefore, requested to keep absence to a minimum. All absences are required to be authorised, or approved, wherever possible before they occur, and it is the parent/carer's responsibility to seek this.

#### **It is the role of the Class teacher to:**

- Maintain accurate electronic registers and records for the children in their care
- Follow up all absences by liaising with office and Head teacher.
- bring poor attendance(as indicated against each name on the register) or trends of non-attendance that is noteworthy, to the attention of the Headteacher.

#### **It is the role of the Headteacher to:**

- Authorise absences on behalf of the governors
- Carry out attendance checks
- Ensure the maintenance of accurate attendance records so that absences can be accurately reported
- Keep governors informed
- Keep parents/carers informed of attendance and punctuality but also improved attendance and punctuality
- Consider / Initiate appropriate action in cases of concern and issue letters to parents as required
- use resources such as the Pupil Premium effectively to improve attendance where necessary
- consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with West Sussex Local Authority policies and procedures
- where needed, set up incentives for individual children and targeted groups of children so that both attendance and punctuality improves.
- liaise with outside agencies and support networks if necessary – such as the Pupil Entitlement team at West Sussex
- liaise with Chesswood, and other locality schools, when there are concerns around absences across families, to track patterns and address safeguarding concerns

#### **It is the role of the governors to:**

- Carry out attendance checks
- Ensure electronic registers are properly kept
- Support the headteacher in improving attendance and punctuality
- Ask the Head Teacher to report on Attendance regularly through reports and meetings

#### **It is the role of the Pupil Entitlement Service to:**

- Support the school in the monitoring of attendance by giving advice as required
- When necessary, to act as the legal representative of the Local Education Authority in the enforcement of their statutory duty to ensure regular attendance
- Targeting support meetings i.e Early Help Families

## Pupils with medical conditions or special education needs and disabilities (40)

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, however, the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. These pupils may need extra support to help them access full-time education and we will work in partnership with parent/carers and outside agencies to support pupils who are experiencing difficulties. This may include a plan of support or a target attended to an EHCP.

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in the pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet individual needs. This should not be used to manage behaviour. This should have a formal arrangement for for regularly review with parent/carers and pupils.

### Equal Opportunities

We will aim to ensure that all children will have an equal and equitable opportunity to explore their potential regardless of gender, ability, cultural or religious background with reference to our school's equal opportunities policy.

### **IMPORTANT:**

Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### 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. Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full time education but this does not have to be at a school.

### Children at Risk of Missing Education

School governing bodies, academy trusts, and other school proprietors must have regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions. Where reasonably practicable, for every pupil, schools should hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. This goes beyond the legal requirement but is good practice. Doing so provides schools with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated. This may include a home visit or a Police welfare check.

## Absences

The Government and West Sussex Policy now state that Head Teachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. These amendments come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. We are still part of the fixed penalty scheme in West Sussex. Further information can be found in school or on the West Sussex County Council website.

Parents are reminded that all absences mean that a child misses learning time and they are, therefore, requested to keep absence to a minimum.

Absences are mainly covered by the following categories:

<b>Authorised Absences</b>
Illness or medical/dental treatment – parents need to inform the school
Educational visits as arranged by the School
Exclusion from school
Days of religious observance.
An organised sports competition or approved public performance or the taking of exams.
Special exceptional circumstances – at the discretion of the Head Teacher
<b>Unauthorised Absences</b>
Holidays

## Registers

Electronic registers will be completed in accordance with the requirements of the DFE document "School Attendance" – Policies and Practice of Attendance", which is available in all schools.

### **Registers close daily at 8.55am for KS 1 and EYFS.**

- A child entering school after 8.55am will be marked as late.
- A child entering school after 9.30am will be marked as 'unauthorised' absence.
- If a child has more than 10 unauthorised absences within a ten week period (2 sessions a day) they will be referred to the West Sussex fixed penalty scheme.

### Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

FPNs are issued for unauthorised absence from school. This is when a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a ten school week period. Each school day is 2 sessions (AM and PM)

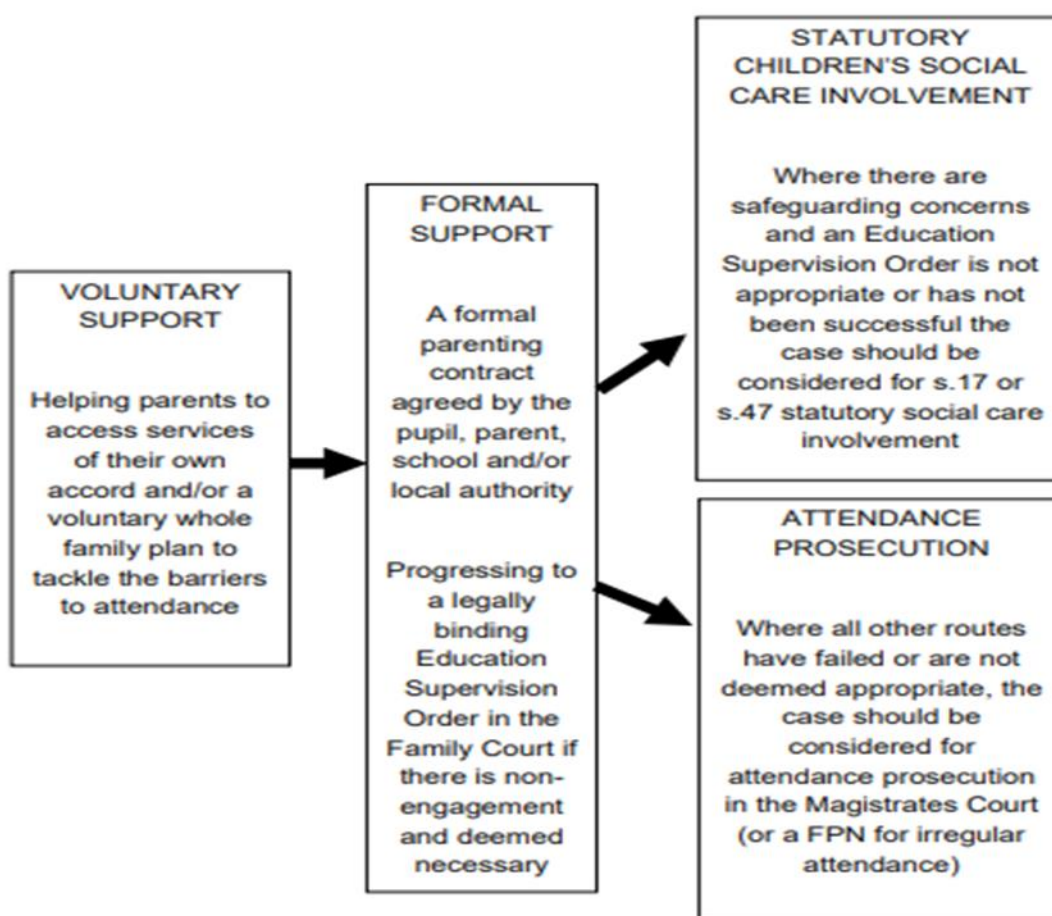
This includes:

- absences recorded in the register as unauthorised
- persistent late arrival at school after the register is taken and is recorded as unauthorised
- a holiday taken in term time
- The first 5 days of when a child is excluded from school

If the school refers a period of absence that is longer than 15 consecutive days, Pupil Entitlement may consider that a FPN is not appropriate but may refer directly to the Courts.

The FPN is issued with an invoice for £120 per parent. This is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days the Authority will consider instigating a prosecution.

89. As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, schools, trusts and local authorities should always work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.



## **Other relevant legislation and guidance**

### **Relevant legislation**

[The Education Act 1996](#)

[The Children Act 1989](#)

[The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)

[The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#)

[The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Sentencing Act 2020](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

### **Relevant government guidance**

[Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour](#)

[Children missing education](#)

[Keeping children safe in education](#)

[Working together to safeguard children](#)

[Elective home education](#)

[Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

[Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England](#)

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#)

[Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)

[Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#)

[Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying](#)