

**SPRINGVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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**Attendance Matters Friday 26th October 2018**

Dear Families,

Twelve months ago we sent out a letter saying that we felt that, whilst attendance in school is good, it could be even better. I’m delighted to say that twelve months on we can report a rise of almost a full 1% in our attendance from 96.6% to 97.5%. Springvale now has the best attendance record of all Barnsley and we want to keep it that! We have also gone a full half term without ***ANY*** late marks! Wow! We want to say a huge well done and thank you to everyone…keep it up!

This term 1.6% of our attendance is lost to term time holidays. As explained in previous newsletters we would always advise against term time holidays as they have a naturally detrimental impact on pupil progress. I do, however, understand the plight of many families who perhaps work in the emergency services or for smaller, private companies who cannot authorise holidays at key times in the year. Holidays cannot be classed as authorised absence but I would only consider a fine if regular and/or unnecessary holidays in term time were taken or where a child’s attendance was already at a concerning level (e.g. less than 90% when factoring in the holiday absence). This principle has been revised in a new policy that will be sent out for family consultation soon.

Naturally, there are occasions where absence is necessary when children need to recover from an illness and in some instances they may require 24/48 hours of being symptom free to ensure that illness is not spread. If your child is feeling unwell with a minor issue- cold, sore throat, etc- then please try to come to school and inform the class teacher that your child isn’t feeling 100% and we can monitor them and contact you if your child is not settled. If your child is too unwell to attend school then please contact school’s dedicated absence phone line on 01226760939 before 8.45am and inform us of the reason for absence being specific rather than saying ‘unwell’ or ‘poorly’. Please then keep us updated on a likely return date daily.

As a guide a child with attendance of approximately 90% has missed half a day of school per week and a child with 80% attendance has missed a full day per week on average. Naturally, both of these would be a concern in terms of a child receiving a consistent learning experience. Persistent absence is now classed as anything below 90% across the school year and this is a key measure that is tracked by Education Welfare Officers and Ofsted. We will communicate with families at least each term if we are concerned about children dropping below this figure.

A child’s attendance record can be requested at any time from the school office by a parent (please note that any absence at the start of the year can significantly affect the percentage as we haven’t been back at school for many sessions so we would look at last year’s average too). We will also send out an annual summary with your child’s report in the Summer Term. Please note that I will meet half termly with Mrs Ridgwick to review attendance and send out any letters where the rate of attendance could be improved. Where improvement is not seen, again- not due to genuine illness- we may need to contact our Educational Welfare Officer for advice and a potential meeting.

Punctuality is also important and, when children arrive late for non-medical reasons, it has an unnecessary and detrimental impact on the learning of not only the child in question but the whole class. Our doors open at 8.45am each day and they are closed (and children marked as late in the register) after 8.50am. At this stage they would need to report to main reception. Late letters will be sent home every time a child does not attend on time.

Thank you for your ongoing support; we are committed to high standards at Springvale and believe that we can work together to make our school and the wider community the best that it can be! Let’s make this year another record breaking year!

**Kind Regards**

**Mr L McClure**

**Headteacher**