



# Springvale Primary School

**Policy Title: Attendance and Punctuality**

**Date of Review: Autumn 2021**

**Review by: Autumn 2022**

**Signed by:**

**Chair of Governors**

**All policies available at [www.springvaleprimary.org](http://www.springvaleprimary.org)**

# SPRINGVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy



### Introduction

This policy was created after a period of consultation with relevant stakeholders within school. It sits alongside our Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) Offer which follows through a series of specific titles and questions that provides parents with a clear insight in to all aspects of policy and provision for SEND pupils.

This policy is in-line with the (BMBC) Local Authority's Code of Conduct and it has been formally adopted by governors and reflects our approach at Springvale Primary School.

### Aims and Principles

The policy is underpinned by the central aims of Springvale Primary and values held by the school community:

#### Aims of the school

- Springvale is committed to promoting high standards of academic achievement for all learners in all subjects.
- As a school we will continue to develop and instil key life skills and values in our pupils.
- We will encourage positive relationships and communications between home, our community and the wider world.

In particular, Springvale School has an inclusive approach to our provision. Our aim is always to involve all our children and stakeholders in all areas of the curriculum and school life. In accordance with our **Disability Equality Scheme** we recognise that this may mean making special adaptations or arrangements from time to time for children with specific disabilities. We welcome the involvement of disabled adults in all areas of school life.

### **Background Information**

Springvale Primary School is a caring and open school, where parents, children, staff and the wider school community all know that their views and needs will be listened to, in both education and personal areas.

## **A Introduction to the policy**

The staff and Governors at Springvale Primary School are committed to promoting a culture of high expectation, achievement and excellence. Good attendance is crucial if students are to take advantage of the learning opportunities available to them and complete a successful journey through their time at our school and as they move on into higher education or the world of work.

All of our school stakeholders need to work in partnership with relevant parties to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in our aim to promote high standards of attendance and punctuality.

**The overall aim for all children should be for 100% attendance, therefore any absence should only be for unavoidable and genuine reasons.**

## **B Registration**

Registration is a legal requirement that has to be undertaken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. This enables us to:

- Monitor attendance regularly
- Evaluate information and set targets/tackle areas of concern as early as possible
- Target absence, punctuality and truancy and communicate with pupils and parents about expectations
- Have the ability to publicise the above data within our school
- Have the ability to give a clear and accurate picture to parents, carers and guardians
- Have the ability to encourage and reward good attendance

## **C Why regular attendance is important**

Any absence, including family holidays, affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Absence during transitional periods or the start of a new term can also significantly affect a child's friendship group and, therefore, their social and emotional progress. Any pupil's absence can disrupt the learning of others as they try to catch up with skills that have been taught in their absence. This can also have a de-motivating effect on individuals if they are unable to access parts of the curriculum following absences.

## **D Rewarding Positive Attendance/Punctuality**

At least once per year we will recognise 'excellence' attendance for individuals and cohorts. We always celebrate the 'Class of the Week' in school and using our newsletters and Twitter feed. We aim to recognise outstanding attendance/punctuality through certificates but we may also reward improvement. Using the term 'outstanding

attendance,' rather than 100% attendance, allows us to focus on children who have missed some school but only for long standing medical appointments or significant circumstantial reasons.

## **E Parental Responsibility**

“All parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive an efficient full-time education suitable for their age, ability and aptitude by regular attendance at school.” (Section 7, Education Act, 1996)

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents and permitting absence from school, without a valid and significant reason, is an offence that may result in prosecution.

Our school will seek to build on partnerships with parents by informing them about concerns at an early stage.

If an absence is for a medical appointment, children should return to school after the appointment if at all possible. Appointments for visits to doctors, dentist etc should, wherever possible, be made out of school hours. Parents are asked to provide a copy of all medical appointment cards/letters for appointments made during the school day. These should be taken to the school office when collecting your child or, ideally, before.

When a child is to be absent from school, parents should contact the school's dedicated absence line (01226 760930) and leave a message with the details of your child, class and the reason for absence. Where possible you should give an indication of a likely return date. If there is no communication from home, parents will be contacted by school under the 'First Day of Absence' procedure set out below.

## **F 'First Day of Absence' procedure**

This procedure is crucial in our efforts to raise the attendance profile of our school. The 'First Day of Absence' system is operated to communicate quickly and effectively with parents and carers regarding the reasons for a child's absence at the beginning of the first day away from school. When a child is absent and no reason has been given, parents will be contacted by school, normally by text message at first and then by telephone. It is a requirement for parents/carers to provide at least two appropriate telephone numbers as emergency contacts. It is the parent/carers' responsibility to ensure that these contact details are up-to-date. This is also vital for safeguarding reasons so that we make contact with an appropriate adult quickly, should your child have an accident or become unwell. In cases where we are unable to make contact with an appropriate adult, we would visit the home address. All contact with home is recorded and monitored by class teachers and/or the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Where leaders are concerned about a child's reason for absence or the welfare of a pupil /family the Headteacher or Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) may visit the family home.

Teaching staff may also make telephone calls to families in relation to any issues concerning children. The office staff are responsible for making calls with regard to

attendance to parents and carers and for recording absence correctly on the School Information Management System (SIMS).

## **G Procedures to be followed by staff**

School staff monitor attendance and punctuality daily. When a child's attendance begins to present concern, without good medical reason/evidence, parents will be informed as outlined below:

### **Step 1: Below 95% attendance: First letter home**

This is to inform parents of potential concerns and to ask for co-operation in trying to improve their child's attendance

### **Step 2: Below 90%: Second letter home or below 95% and no improvement since last letter.**

At this point parents will be invited into school to discuss issues relating to their child's attendance. At this meeting:

- Senior Leadership Team and, where appropriate external support agencies, will offer any relevant support or guidance to the family and they may make referrals as required for further intervention
- A clear target will be set for improvement (and monitor in the following period).
- Expectations will be made clear.
- A copy of the school policy will be shared.
- Parents may be reminded to provide medical evidence for any future absence from school.

## **H Arriving late for school**

Letters may also be sent out for an incident of lateness. Our doors open between 8.40-8.50am depending on your child's class. Pupils are deemed to be late when arriving after 8.55am and their late mark is recorded at the main reception. Children arriving after 8.55am should be accompanied by a parent/carer to the main reception so that a reason for absence/lateness can be given. The number of minutes late is recorded in order to measure the impact of lost education due to late arrival. Under exceptional circumstances (e.g. COVID) attendance times may be altered. Any changes will be communicated to families by newsletter.

Please note that arrival after 9.30am without reason will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the whole of the morning session. We will send out letters, contact parents via telephone, arrange meetings, set targets and, in the case of continued punctuality issues, seek EWO advice and, where appropriate, consider legal action and issuing penalty notices.

## **I Holiday/absence requests- see Appendix A**

All requests for leave must be documented on a school request form (see Appendix A). Parents should share details about the request (including the specific dates) and give any special circumstances that explain the need to take your child out of school during term time. The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' and on

a case by case basis. School will respond to the request in writing and it is possible that a penalty notice may be issued.

## **J Legal Action (Penalty Notices)**

The school and Governing Body do not wish to take legal action against parents/carers for unauthorised absences or incidents of persistent lateness. However, we may consider legal action as we aim to ensure that every child is in school every day. Recurring unauthorised absence may lead to a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and this can lead to legal interventions and a formal assessment. The unauthorised absence may also result in a Penalty Notice being issued through the local authority. This penalty will be £60 (per child, per full school week) if paid within 21 days; payment after this time, but within 28 days, is £120.

## **K Approved Absence**

School leaders may authorise absence that will not affect attendance for visits to a potential new school settings, attending sporting/performance activities (like elite coaching or competition, or musical instrument examinations) or attend school visits or sporting competitions. This absence will be at the discretion of the Headteacher and it will only be approved if a child's attendance and behaviour are exemplary. This absence cannot be taken at key times of the year like formal assessments such as SATS and nor can it be taken during key learning dates like school visits, for example. Where potential absence for sporting talents clash with a school sports event, the school's programme of events will always take precedence.

## **L Governors Monitoring**

Attendance data and the overall effectiveness of school attendance procedures are provided to the Governing Body at their termly meetings to support the monitoring of this across school.

The governing body will;

- Elect a Safeguarding Governor who will work alongside office staff and Senior Leaders to ensure that attendance systems are effective. This is currently Miss C Throssell at Springvale Primary.
- Ensure that the legal requirements for registration are complied with.
- Review the school Attendance and Punctuality Policy on a regular basis.
- Ensure that the Policy is in line with the BMBC 'Code of Conduct.'
- Have input into school attendance targets.
- Receive reports and statistics at least termly.
- Support the need for good attendance.

## **M Education Welfare Officers (EWO)**

The EWO is a Local Authority employee who monitors attendance remotely and is responsible for the general well-being of all school aged children across the borough. Where necessary and appropriate, EWO will work alongside school staff to address pupil related issues that may be affecting their attendance at school. When a child is referred to Education Welfare, the officers will work within Local Authority guidelines to address the issues.

## **N Attendance during periods of COVID restrictions**

The Government is clear in its guidance that school attendance is a priority and that all pupils are expected to attend school unless they have a significant reason to be absent. Our risk assessment is extensive, detailed and regularly reviewed. It is always shared with parents and carers to be transparent about our approach.

From August 2021, any child who is absent due to self-isolation whilst taking a COVID test (school or family related, having symptoms themselves or being contacted through track and trace) will receive an 'X' code in the register and they will have directed work set to complete at home in accordance with the school's Remote Education Policy, if they are well enough to do so. Children with symptoms will be sent home from school immediately to take a test- again this will be coded as an X mark. Any siblings or close contacts can remain in school unless they start to display symptoms.

An 'X' code will not affect a child's attendance record.

The rules on travel are changing regularly. Children who go on holiday will receive an unauthorised mark (see section I above) but for any enforced period of self-isolation or quarantine following their return from holiday, they will receive the 'X' code too.

If a child tests positive for COVID they will be marked as ill using the 'I' code for the full period of illness. Again, appropriate remote work will be provided when the child is well enough to complete the work.

Parents/carers with concerns about the prevalence of COVID in the local community or national guidelines should discuss these matters with the Headteacher as soon as possible. Children will be marked as an unauthorised absence if they do not attend unless they are following clear government guidelines- many of which are flexible. The school will use weekly newsletters to update families about these guidelines and any relevant changes. Any family with significant, underlying health issues should contact the school to discuss any changing circumstances or concerns. Vulnerable pupils and staff have been risk assessed carefully and these risk assessment can be reviewed and adapted in partnership with parents/carers. Where complex medical circumstances are evidenced, a child may complete work remotely but only where this has been agreed formally by our Education Welfare Officer in conjunction with school leaders and the Governing Body.