



## Policy Name: Pupil Attendance at School

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Responsible Person: Sarah Edwards  
Governor Approval:

Annette Bradley 25/01/18

### INTRODUCTION

Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' according to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013. Such regulations apply to all schools whether they are mainstream or special.

Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year unless there is a medical reason for their absence.

There are two categories of absence:-

- Authorised – where the head teacher approves the absence
- Unauthorised – where the head teacher will not approve absence

All pupils should be aiming for 100% attendance and parents support and encouragement is crucial.

### Pupils not of compulsory school age

The Department of Education notes that unauthorised absence does not apply to pupils of non-compulsory school age and any absence for these pupils will be recorded as authorised.

Head teachers cannot refuse to approve leave for pupils who are not yet legally required to be in full-time education, or who are over eighteen years old. However we encourage all parents to establish good patterns of attendance, to follow the policy as through their child were of compulsory school age and to encourage positive attitudes to attending school all of the time.

### Registration



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Registration is taken twice daily and the register closes at 9.30 am and 1.15pm. It is an expectation that all pupils will be marked as late should they arrive after this time. If their lateness is as a result of their school transport not arriving on time, or due to inclement weather, then the pupil will not be marked as late. If a parent/carer is responsible for bringing the pupil, it is an expectation that they arrive in time for the beginning of the school day which begins at 9.05am.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

The Government does not define the 'exceptional circumstances' in which a Head teacher is allowed to authorise an absence. However the DfE advice document on school attendance says that 'Schools should consider each application [for authorised leave of absence] individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and the relevant background context behind the request'. In practice, this means that some leave will be authorised and others will not – each request will be considered individually taking all the circumstances into account. There are examples of the same 'type' of leave being authorised or not authorised according to the information provided by the family, a social worker or a doctor.

At Springwater School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

... being of unique and significant emotional, educational, social, physical or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time

For this reason the school provide a form in which parent/carers can explain why they consider their request to be exceptional.

Here are some examples of exceptional circumstances where leave might be granted:

- Attendance at a funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling
- Sudden loss of housing
- Attendance at a wedding of parents or siblings
- A religious observance
- Transport not being provided by the Local Authority when it should have been
- Children of service personnel who are about to go on deployment, or who are returning from active deployment
- A stay at a respite, or hospice setting
- Leave where it is recommended for the family, following a bereavement, medical issue, or other traumatic event
- Leave for a family emergency and childcare arrangements cannot be made



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- Where inflexibility of parents' leave or working arrangements is part of company policy.

### **Advanced Authorisation**

All applications for leave during term time must be made in advance and at least two working weeks before that leave is to be taken, using the School Application Form. This can be requested from the school office.

Additional evidence such as a letter from a doctor, or an appointment letter for a hospice stay should be provided and attached at the time.

The form or a letter will be returned to the parent explaining the decision of the head teacher. The head teacher will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school.

Parents can be fined for taking their children on holiday in term time without the school's permission. Local Authorities and Schools can also issue penalty notices. Where leave has been applied for and refused by the Head Teacher this will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Parents/carers cannot apply for authorised leave after the event.

### **Absence due to illness**

We understand that on occasions students may have to miss school due to ill health. We ask that parents adopt a bracing approach to illness. Please only keep students off when it is necessary (school will support children with medical needs).

If a pupil is absent because of illness, parents should call the school on the first day of the absence stating a reason and the expected time of return. Should the absence continue the parent should keep the school informed. A note should be sent on the day the child returns to school explaining the absence. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence.

If contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parents or carers, then the school would contact the home by telephone on the initial day, following this with a letter after 3 days of unexplained absence. They will explore all possible ways of making contact in order to ensure that the child is safe. This can include text message and personal contact through transport staff.

If pupils are absent with a potentially infectious illness it is an expectation that parents keep children at home until they are fully recovered from their symptoms. This supports the effective functioning of the school, and helps to keep all pupils safe and well. In the case of diarrhoea and vomiting we would request that all parents/carers keep their



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children off for at least forty eight hours following their last episode of loose bowels or vomiting.

### **What can parents do to help?**

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is away.
- Send a note when your child returns to school.
- Try to make all appointments outside school time.
- Do not allow your child to have time off school, or to get into bad habits with their attendance

If you feel that there is an issue with your child's attendance and you need support from school, please do not hesitate to ask your child's class teacher, or a head of department to support with this.

### **Returning to school after a long illness**

We all realize that returning to school following a period of absence can be very difficult for some young people, whatever the reason for their absence. In these situations school staff will plan carefully with parents /carers, together with any relevant agencies about how best to support the student /pupils return to school. In some cases for a short period it may be appropriate to have a phased return to school life.

### **THE SCHOOL REGISTER**

Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school.

They also contribute to pupil's end of term reports and attendance is also noted on the EHCP.

For these reasons registers are required to be marked in ink and not easily erased, and all alterations should be visible and explained. Instructions are given inside the front cover of the Register. Advice on the register code can be sought from the office staff and the Local Authority.

### **MONITORING**

Pupil attendance is monitored for each pupil. The Governing Body carries out termly monitoring of attendance. Where there are particular concerns about a level of pupil



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attendance, then this is also reported to the Governing Body without using the pupil or family name. The Governing Body will receive information about the interventions school has made in order to support the pupil back to being a full time attendee. All parents and carers are asked to discuss concerns about their child's attendance urgently as support can be offered.