

Springwood Infant and Junior School Federation

TOGETHER WE LEARN, TOGETHER WE GROW



Springwood Federation Attendance Policy

Statutory Policy

Approved By: **Governing Body**

Effective Date: **September 2024**

Review By: **September 2025**

Stay Safe,
Treat Others How You Wish to be Treated,
Try Your Best and be Proud

1 Introduction

School attendance is subject to various education laws and Springwood Federation's attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Hampshire County Council. In accordance with the statutory requirement this policy forms part of the school's requirement to have a home school agreement as set down in Section 110 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Furthermore, to Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18. As part of this agreement parents must perform their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age who are registered to a school attend regularly.

This Attendance policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- Admissions
- Anti-bullying
- Child Protection
- Safeguarding
- Special Educational Needs
- Behaviour Policy

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our pupils is included in our admission information. By enrolling a pupil in our school, it is an expectation that all parents will support their children to attend, unless there is a valid reason for absence.

This policy will be publicised in writing for all staff, parents and pupils via the school website every four years, unless there is new guidance from Hampshire County Council and is available in the following languages:

- English

Should you wish, an interpreter can be organised through the LA to support parents of pupils with English as an Additional Language. (EAL).

1. Rationale / Statement of Intent:

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. The school target for 2024-25 is at least 95%. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

2 Operating the Policy

2.1 Promoting Good Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance from Hampshire County Council on our website
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments. If your child has absence of under 96% you will be notified in writing.
- Celebrate good attendance
- Set targets for the school attendance and display these in the school and on the website
- Support attendance through specific work with one of the attendance team. This may be in the form of group support, work with parents or work within the home.

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The Schools' Attendance Leader is Mrs Jo Livingstone (Executive Headteacher) and is supported by Sarah Johnson (Attendance & Back to Basics Lead).

A member of the Senior Leadership Team and Administrative Officers will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the schools' work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the schools. This team will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parent/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Responsibilities of Teaching Staff:

- Ensure that all pupils are admitted safely and registered accurately
- Promote and reward good attendance and positive attitudes towards current school life and career aspirations at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the Administrative Officers on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence to the Attendance leader.

Responsibilities of Pupils:

- To attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- To arrive in school on time and arrive well prepared after breaks in the school day

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers' legal responsibility (1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on **each day** of absence by **9:30am by a phone call or email**.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for high attendance each year.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for medical or dental appointments which are not medical emergencies.
- Only request for leave of absence, if it is for an exceptional circumstance

3 Recording Attendance

3.1 Registration

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is

- Once at the start of the junior school day 8.45am and again for the afternoon session at 1.00pm.
- Once at the start of the infant school day 8.55am and again for the afternoon session at 1.00pm

3.2 Lateness /Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school / lessons are used to provide instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, which can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

All pupils are expected to be in school at this time. Children will be marked as Late (coded 'L') should they arrive:

- After 8:50am at the junior school
- After 9:00am at the infant school

Parents and carers will also be asked to sign their child into school and state the reason for lateness. Children arriving late will be monitored and their cumulative lateness reported half termly.

All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence (coded 'U') in line with Hampshire County Council (HCC) and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence. The close of registration is:

- After 9:15am at the junior school

- After 9:25am at the infant school

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence (coded 'M'). Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action (see section 6 for further detail).

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered.

If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period the school will be required by Hampshire County Council to issue a Penalty Notice in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance (See section 6 of this policy for further detail). The school may refer families to Attendance Legal Panel (ALP) if this is more appropriate to the family's needs at the time of continued absence.

3.3 Collection at the end of the school day or after a club

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. The school day finishes for both schools at 3:00pm. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected children to a place of safety and share concerns as necessary with other agencies. Please also ensure that you arrive on time for collection from after school clubs.

3.4 What to do if my child is absent?

First Day Absence

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

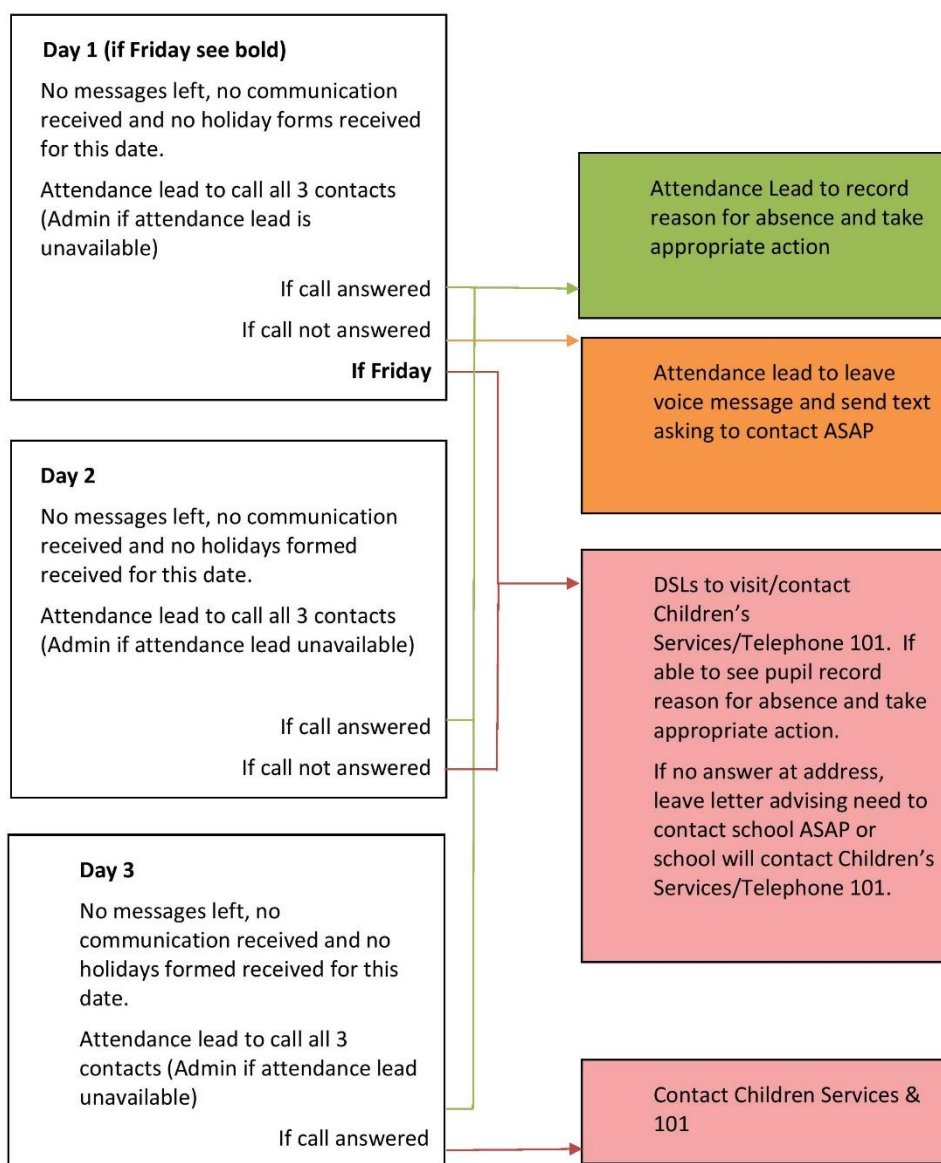
If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence to explain the reason, and subsequent days if appropriate; by **9:30am**.

If your child is absent without the school knowing of the reason we will

- Invite you in to discuss the situation with Mrs Livingstone or Mrs Johnson, if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels (ALP) if absence is unauthorised and is for ten sessions in a one hundred session period.

Contact Procedure for Pupils Absent with no reason



Continued Absence

Depending on the circumstances of absence, the school may contact the parents/carers to make a home visit and discuss absence, offering support to return to school where possible.

Please Note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parent/carers **after three days of absence the school is required to start a child missing in education procedures** as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends, wider family.

Ten Day's Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carers then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have at least **three up to date contact numbers**. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If your child misses 10% (3 weeks/ 30 sessions) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as persistent absentees.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education.

If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 95% we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, the schools will arrange to meet with you to discuss reasons and offer support.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Attendance Plan or home school contract and these will include targets for improved attendance

Children at Springwood Federation are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

4 Request for Leave of Absence:

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from August 2024: (Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are **rare, significant, or unavoidable** which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from the school office) in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission for an exceptional circumstance from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct, parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 6 for detail).

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to not take children out during school time. Unauthorised absences of ten sessions in a one hundred session period will result in a Penalty Notice or prosecution if appropriate.

5 Understanding Types of Absence:

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

6 Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance and other Legal Measures

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence (5 or more days equivalent) and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures are for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Attendance contracts
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

Legal Measures for absence taken when the Headteacher has declined parent/carers request for leave of absence

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. Non approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
2. A holiday that has been taken without permission

and the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions then a penalty notice for non-attendance will be issued.

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non- Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from:

<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/codeofconduct-IssuingPenaltyNoticesforunauthorisedabsencesfromschools.pdf>

The code of conduct states that Schools or Hampshire Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- Absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
- Persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- Persistently late before the close of the register (coded L), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code O), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- Absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance

- Absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a **single Penalty Notice is issued for either:**

1. 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period
2. 1 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter or through the leave of absence request form. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carers who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parent/carers for each child. NB. This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one PN for each child to each parent

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to **£160** if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid the Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of Penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Councils website at:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/behaviour-attendance-parents>

7 Children who avoid coming to School

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never best to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

At Springwood Infant and Junior schools we can offer a support service with one of our attendance team.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.

Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch to keep themselves healthy.

For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you but consistency and a caring supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

Leavers/Posted (military families)

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to the junior school/parents are asked to:

1. Inform the school as soon as possible of your transfer
2. Give the school office comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & Modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance license and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C1 an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for Sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching. Any absence recorded for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity is recorded as P an authorised absence. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

Gypsy Roma Traveller, Showman and Showman families

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance Learning packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

8 Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups.