



# Attendance Policy

## May 2022

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<b>Version No:</b>	002
<b>Ratified by:</b>	Spring Meadow Infant and Nursery School Governing Body
<b>Date Ratified:</b>	May 2022
<b>Signed :</b>	
<b>Review Timetable:</b>	Bi-annual Review
<b>Review:</b>	The document should be updated bi-annually after ratification or earlier if there is any new local or national guidance, changes in process or legislation.
<b>Purpose of Document:</b>	To comply with legislation & guidance including:
<b>Links to other policies</b>	Safeguarding policy, Remote learning policy
<b>Impact on;</b> Safeguarding Equality & Diversity SEND	Safeguarding: The school will monitor attendance to ensure all children receive their right to an education. The school will monitor and will follow protocol in case children go missing in education
<b>Implementation:</b>	The policy can be accessed via the Staff Share and through any mandatory updates.
<b>Dissemination:</b>	The policy will be available to all staff, teaching and non-teaching, and to the wider public via the website.

## 1. Statement of Intent

The school aims to work together with Parents/Carers to ensure that all children registered at the school attend both every day and punctually.

## 2. Parents/Carers' Responsibilities

2.1 As parents/carers it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered regularly and punctually.

2.2 Parents/Carers should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reasons such as sickness, they should telephone the school as soon as possible, but by 9:00am, on each day of the absence.

2.3 Parents/Carers should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration (0850). If a child is late (after 0900), please sign them in at the school office. Registers close at 1310 in the afternoon. If a child arrives after the register is closed they will be marked as 'L'. If a child arrives after 0915 they will be marked as 'U'. U is an unauthorised absence.

**Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as unauthorised if a child arrives late more than 3 times in a half term.**

2.4 We are keen to ensure that we promote the highest attendance possible for all our young people as this is a fundamental life skill that will ensure young people's future success. Not only is it vital that our young people establish the very best habits and routines to ensure their success as future employees but there is also very clear national data that clearly shows the impact that poor attendance has on young people achieving the best possible outcomes and educational achievements. In short, if children are not at school we cannot teach them and this will affect their academic achievement at all levels.

As a result of this we are taking a very firm and consistent view when parents seek permission for an absence from school for their child due to circumstances other than genuine illness. All parents can expect that all requests from parents seeking permission for leave of absence for their child will be refused and therefore unauthorised. Permission may be sought where there are exceptional circumstances such as attending the funeral of a close family relative or religious observance.

## 3. School Responsibilities

3.1 The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress. We expect attendance at school to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

3.2 Registers will be called twice daily at 0900 and 1300. (Reception 1245) In the morning gates will be locked at 0900 promptly to ensure

- 3.3 Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the guidance contained in the register. Registers are reviewed by the school attendance officer at regular intervals.
- 3.4 Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality, **their** concerns should be brought to the Headteacher.
- 3.5 If a child is absent the office staff will enter the appropriate code in the register. If no explanation has been received by 9:15am from the child's Parents/Carers then, on safe guarding grounds, the school will endeavour to make contact with the parent, after which an appropriate judgement regarding authorisation will be made. If parents do not respond by 9.45am, the school will ring home, then all the given emergency numbers that the parent/carer has provided. If the child cannot be located by 10am, the school will visit the home. If the child cannot be located, a phone call will be made to the police, (or social worker if one is working with the family). This is called 'An Alive and Well' procedure and is part of our safeguarding duties.
- 3.6 The Headteacher and attendance officer will regularly collect attendance data and will use this data during meetings with parents where required. These meetings will put in motion the following course of action for children who have low levels of attendance:

Attendance percentage	Action taken	By whom
<96%	Verbal conversation	Class teacher
<94%	Discussion and warning letter issued*	Attendance officer
<92%	Action plan to be put in place with parents*	Attendance officer/ Headteacher
<90%	Penalty notice to be issued	Attendance officer/ Headteacher

\*If absence persists a penalty notice will be issued

- 3.7 The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:
- the Headteacher and class teachers will communicate regularly with parents/carers on attendance matters;
  - appropriate personal encouragement or congratulation will be offered to individual children and classes. Discretion will be used, where a child's time off is for unavoidable medical appointments which could not be arranged outside the school day or in the holidays;
  - Local Authority Parents/Carers leaflets will be sent to all new Parents/Carers.
  - Clear attendance information is available here in the Attendance Policy which is available on the school website and from the school office.

## **4. Definitions**

### **Authorised Absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate, acceptable reason and the school has received an appropriate notification from the parent/carer. For example, should a child be unwell and the parent/carer writes a note of explanation and/or telephones the school to explain the reason for absence. (Please notify the school on the first day of absence).
- Only the Headteacher or a properly designated member of staff may authorise any absence. Parents do not have the authority to do so. Consequently, not all absence supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and the parent/carer or if the child is away from school without good reason even with the support of a parent/carer (eg shopping or a birthday).

## **5. Circumstances in which Penalty Notices may be issued**

- A. As the Government changed the PA (Persistent Absence) threshold to 90% (in effect from Sept. 2015), the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice in relation to a child whose attendance at school is less than 90% over a given period. To allow time and opportunity for early intervention work with the family, attendance will be monitored by school and Local Authority before enforcement actions are considered.
- B. Holidays taken within the school term (except in exceptional circumstances agreed by the Head teacher) will be deemed as unauthorised absence. The expectation of the Local Authority is that term time holidays should not be planned or booked as they are likely to lead to the issuing of a penalty notice. Parents/carers who take their children on unauthorised, term time holidays or whose child is persistently absent over a given period, may be issued with a penalty notice or subject to court proceedings for failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

**Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days) not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), will receive a Penalty Notice.** Therefore Penalty Notices will be issued for single event absences of at least 3 consecutive school days or more where these absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable. The absences must be recorded with a 'G' code in the attendance register. Such cases will have to be supported by evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice.

**In our school, the head teacher's decision not to authorise a holiday at the bottom of the special leave of absence form, will serve as the penalty warning.**

A Penalty Notice is £120 per parent, per child, reduced to £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days. Non-payment of the Penalty Notice within 28 days may be subject to court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child(ren), which could result in a fine of up to £1,000. **(This includes both parents with parental responsibility unless either parent has written to say they do not support the holiday.)**

Exceptional circumstances for absence will be considered by the head teacher on an individual basis and against the fundamental principles of being rare, significant, unavoidable and short in duration.

Examples of situations that will not be deemed as exceptional:

- cheaper holidays in England or abroad
- visiting family/friends who have different half term holiday dates
- visits to see family abroad
- family weddings (unless immediate family and then only for the wedding itself)
- relatives coming to visit

This attendance policy will be reviewed in **May 2024** or following any further updates from the Local Authority.