



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Date approved: October 2023**

**Review date: Autumn 2024**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the latest Local Authority and Government (DfE) guidance regarding school attendance and improving attendance (linked below):

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1099677/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/schools-learning-and-childcare/schools/school-attendance/#:~:text=Each%20day%20of%20school%20missed,a%20pupil's%20attendance%20is%2090%25.>

*'Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school'.*

*DfE Working together to improve school attendance, May 2022*

Regular school attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them at Springfield School. We seek to maximise attendance rates by instilling in children a respect for education, recognising and praising those who achieve full attendance and investigating the reasons behind missed sessions. Through policy and practice we strive to promote the value of regular attendance with pupils and parents. We apply all related Government and local authority guidance (see links above) including the guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023

### **PROCEDURES:**

#### **REGISTRATION**

It is a legal requirement that all schools must keep an Attendance Register. At the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, a pupil should be marked present or absent. AM registration at Springfield is carried out electronically by form tutors via our online ClassCharts system. Staff take a digital register, via ClassCharts, within the first 5 minutes of each lesson throughout the school day. The period 4 lesson mark is also used as the PM registration mark. Once saved, reports showing which pupils are absent can be produced. The Attendance Assistant uses these reports to cross check known absence information and attendance data from Lesson Monitor. For all remaining unexplained absence the Attendance Assistant will contact parents/carers to check and verify reasons for absence.

- Morning registration will take place at 8.35am
- Every pupil must be marked (via ClassCharts) either present (/), late (L) or absent (N)
- Students on reduced/alternative timetables must sign in at the welfare office on arrival to school
- Any pupil arriving in the tutor room after 8.35am and before 9.00am will be marked as late by the form tutor (with the number of minutes late logged via ClassCharts)

- Any pupil arriving at school after the end of the tutor period (9.00am) or after their year group has gone into assembly must sign in as late at the Welfare Office where a late slip will be issued
- Students arriving after 9.45am, without a valid reason, will be marked as 'late after the register has closed'
- Students who arrive late will be placed in a 15/30 minute detention. The Year Office will follow up all pupils who sign in late
- A School Detention will be issued to any pupil receiving three or more late slips within a half term. Parents will always be informed (via ClassCharts and phone call if applicable) and same day detentions will be issued for persistent offenders
- Any pupil who misses their Year Group Assembly through lateness will receive a 30 minute Detention
- TGAs and Prefects must register before they go to meetings or activities
- Statistics on attendance and punctuality will be shown on the pupil's progress reports and reported to parents via ClassCharts (up to and including the previous day's attendance data).
- 100% attendance and significant attendance improvements will be recognised by the presentation of a certificate in assembly and the award of house points on a termly basis. Those pupils achieving 100% attendance throughout the school year will receive a special certificate. Such recognition/reward will be logged, in the first instance, via ClassCharts

## **LESSON REGISTRATION**

- All classes must be registered via ClassCharts 'Attendance' within the first 5 minutes of the lesson
- Paper registers must be taken when there is a power/internet outage

## **FOLLOWING UP ABSENCE**

- The school employs an Attendance Assistant (AA) who will attempt to telephone the parents of every absent pupil on the first day of absence. The attendance assistant will also use the School comms system to make 'first day' contact where no reason has been provided for absence. A dedicated 'phone line and answer machine is available for parents to telephone the school when their child is absent and this is monitored by the Attendance Assistant. Parents may also use the school attendance email and respond to any Schoolcomms messages regarding absence. It is important that form tutors inform the Attendance Assistant if they have been given advance notice by parents that a pupil will be absent from school. These notes must be left at the front of the register so the Attendance Assistant can see them immediately. The AA will then code the absence and will keep the letter in the Welfare Office for half a term. However, there is no legal requirement to store notes once the sessions have been coded unless there are specific concerns about a pupil's level of progress
- Where the Attendance Assistant has established why a pupil is absent from school a note will be added to ClassCharts and marked accordingly. This removes the requirement for the pupil to bring a note on their return
- Care should be taken over which codes to use for sessions caused by work placements or attendance at an alternative provision. Advice should be sought from the DHT, Head of Achievement or Attendance Assistant
- If the Attendance Assistant cannot make contact with a parent, having tried for three days, she will inform the Year Office concerned, by printing out a list of unexplained sessions. The Year Office will then take the necessary steps to chase up the sessions with the pupil and ask for a note to be brought in. If a note (or other relevant evidence) is not produced then the absence will then be cleared and coded accordingly. If a note is not produced then it will be assumed that

- the pupil has truanted and their parents will be contacted and sanctions imposed. It may be necessary for the Head of Achievement/Pastoral Manager to discuss this directly with parents
- Home visits are conducted by school staff if, and when, a child remains absent and school has been unable to make contact with parents/carers over a number of days
  - The Head of Achievement, in consultation with the DHT, reserves the right to refuse to authorise an absence if the reason given is not considered as acceptable. This applies even where a note has been provided by the parents. If tutors have any cause to doubt the validity of the note or the signature they should report their concerns to the Head of Achievement immediately
  - Parents must provide medical evidence of illness if an absence exceeds 5 days
  - If the School Nurse sends a pupil home for part of the school day having contacted the parents, then there is no need for the parents to send a note in when the child returns to school
  - All pupils who need to leave school during school hours for medical, dental or similar appointments are asked to provide evidence (copy of appointment card or similar). Students should sign in/out at the Welfare Office before/after such appointments. Parents/carers should endeavour, where possible, to make appointments which have the least impact on the school day and to ensure that students attend school promptly before/after appointments as appropriate
  - The Attendance Assistant produces regular lists of pupils who arrive late to school – morning or afternoon – and informs parents. Head of Achievements or the Pastoral Managers then follow up with sanctions

### **LONG TERM ILLNESS OR INJURY**

- Pupils with long term medical conditions or who have sustained serious injury that affects their attendance are closely monitored by the School Nurse and the Head of Achievement who will liaise with parents and/or other medical personnel, including the NHS School Nurse. If long term support is required, an individual health care plan will be set up in order to ease return to school and to address gaps in learning
- Work to be done at home is provided by the school, particularly in the core subjects, as appropriate. Work will usually be set via Google classroom and students may be directed to study websites such as Oak Academy. The Head of Achievement will organise provision and subject departments will ensure that appropriate work is set and marked. If the absence becomes prolonged, then the Head of Achievement may request support from The Harbour School with individual tuition.

### **MEDICAL CONDITIONS/SEND/PUPILS WITH A SOCIAL WORKER**

- The school will maintain an ambitious approach to good attendance for students with medical conditions and/or SEND needs
- Individual plans will be created as required including the use of EHCP's where applicable/necessary
- School Governors will review the attendance for all groups and help leaders to focus support on the pupils who need it
- Where necessary the LA/SAT will support the school/families to work with partners and other services and ensure that suitable provision is arranged
- If applicable, the school will work closely with social workers (including those who work with looked after children) to support attendance improvements

## IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

- A dedicated senior leader has overall responsibility for 'championing' and improving attendance
- School governors take an active role to monitor and improve attendance
- The local authority (School Attendance Team – LA/SAT) will provide a named 'point of contact' and provide guidance/discussions on a termly basis regarding our strategic approach to attendance
- The school employs an Attendance Intervention Manager who oversees actions required to improve attendance including: concern letters, parental meetings, curriculum interventions and home visits
- Form tutors are expected to monitor attendance on a weekly basis, acting quickly in response to early concerns (discussion with student and/or phone call/meeting with parents). Tutors will also reward outstanding (100%) and improving attendance (house points). To support this process tutors are asked to review summary attendance data for their groups/sub-groups via the ClassCharts system
- A Pastoral Manager has the responsibility to oversee attendance with the designated Head of Achievement and to manage a case load of pupils and families with complex difficulties that have an impact on attendance
- Each Head of Achievement and Pastoral Manager work closely with the Attendance Assistant and Attendance Intervention Manager, meeting every week to discuss concerns about individual pupil attendance. The Attendance Intervention Manager publishes lists every week of all those pupils whose attendance falls below 90% so that the Head of Achievement/Pastoral Manager can act on any pupils who appear to be at risk of declining attendance. Students causing concern will receive standard letters (MED1) following a \*10 (or fewer if appropriate) missed sessions and MED2 if no improvement is seen.
- Concern letter(s) will also be sent to parents where 'sporadic' attendance patterns and/or punctuality to school are causing concern
- Parents and students are routinely encouraged to log into the ClassCharts system in order that they can review individual attendance patterns at home/outside school
- The DHT meets with the Heads of Achievement and Attendance Intervention Manager weekly to highlight attendance concerns and decide action where appropriate.
- The Attendance Intervention Manager, working alongside Pastoral Managers support pupils and their families to resolve individual or family issues with school attendance. She/he will meet with pupils on an individual basis in school and conduct home visits. She/he also supports preventative work in school via assemblies, parents' evenings etc
- The Attendance Intervention Manager and Head of Achievement agree a plan to raise concern with parents when attendance drops below 95%: by letter or phone call. Parents may also be asked to meet with the designated Pastoral Manager and Head of Achievement and agree an action plan to improve their child's attendance. The NHS School Nurse/CAMHS may be involved if there are health problems. This meeting provides an opportunity to discuss and resolve any social, emotional or academic concerns a pupil may have regarding attending school. An attendance target form is completed and a review meeting set
- The school produces a leaflet, issued to all Year 7, for parents that outlines the school's aims and expectations for pupil attendance and the responsibilities the school, parents, local authority and pupils have. This can also be found on the school website
- The school will 'signpost' services to support families and referrals are made to outside agencies such as CAMHS, Relate/U-Matter where they might have a role in supporting families with attendance. The school/LA will raise an EHA (Early Help assessment) if required and lead or support TAF/TAC meetings as appropriate

- Low attendance, poor punctuality can be indicators of a safeguarding concern and school staff will be mindful of this when working with children and families. IF an attendance related safeguarding concern is identified the systems and procedures outlined in the school's safeguarding and child protection policy/appendices will be followed
- The School Attendance Team may issue Fixed Penalty Notices as an early preventative measure and will continue to carry out the mandatory annual register checks. Warning letters for these are sent to the parents of pupils who have 10+ unauthorised sessions in a term. An officer from SAT will chair an Attendance Panel for pupils who have had significant unauthorised sessions and whose family are unwilling to cooperate with the school over this issue. The panel will set a six week plan with a possible prosecution if no improvement is made

### **PERSISTENT ABSENCE/SEVERELY ABSENT PUPILS**

Pupils are considered by the Local Authority and the DfE to be persistent absentees if their attendance falls below 90%. Students with attendance below 50% are known as 'severely absent'. The Year Offices use the attached School Absence Escalation Process and referrals from the Attendance Intervention Manager in order to identify and intervene with pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees. The DHT reports to governors every half term on attendance and unauthorised absence figures and annually with a more detailed review of persistent absenteeism data. For pupils with attendance below 50% ('severely absent') a joint approach will be agreed with the LA/SAT.

### **REDUCED TIMETABLES**

- Will only be used in exceptional circumstances
- Will have a duration lasting no longer than six weeks (or 'shortest time possible') unless, following a six weekly review, it is agreed to extend the reduced timetable period
- Will be agreed by parents and logged via the LA reduced timetable form on the LA School Secure Environment platform (including agreed 'extensions')
- Must be regularly reviewed and in the case of an extension a further LA form will be completed/submitted
- Any absence occurring as a direct result of a reduced timetable will be coded 'C' (authorised)
- Should be arranged in accordance with the local authority guidance linked below

[https://portsmouthlocaloffer.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/GUI\\_ReducedTimetableGuidanceFlowchartFormsandFormGuidance\\_20180924.pdf](https://portsmouthlocaloffer.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/GUI_ReducedTimetableGuidanceFlowchartFormsandFormGuidance_20180924.pdf)

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE TAKEN IN TERM TIME**

The 2013 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; references to family holiday and extended leave have been removed. The amendments came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.

'Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.'

In line with DfE school attendance and absence regulations, the school will not authorise holidays or 'family days' in term time for students of any age. Holidays (or other leave of absence) taken without permission will be recorded as unauthorised absence on the pupil's attendance record and school report.

The leave of absence form ('LOAF') reminds parents that unauthorised absence will be referred to the local authority; a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued or other formal action taken.

Note that parents may apply for a leave of absence for their child for exceptional reasons by completing a 'leave of absence from school' form and submitting this to the Headteacher with a supporting letter, if required.

## **HOLIDAY DATES AND OFFICIAL CLOSURES**

Dates for the next half term period are published on the Springfield Newsletter, which is sent home towards the end of each half term. These dates also appear on the school website ([www.springfield.uk.net](http://www.springfield.uk.net)). Any particular events such as periods of suspended timetable for Year 11 examinations, non-uniform days or professional closure days for the staff are highlighted on these publications and on the website. Where possible, we liaise with other schools in our cluster to coordinate any closures.

## **TRUANCY**

If a pupil is caught truanting from school the parents will always be informed via telephone and/or ClassCharts. The school may impose a full range of sanctions including, but not limited to:

- Report card to monitor attendance at lessons
- Detentions
- Use of the isolation room/alternative suspension

## **POST REGISTRATION TRUANCY**

- Class teachers are required to call a register or pupils in their teaching group at the start of each lesson
- If there is any cause to question a pupil's absence from a lesson they should be checked against other ClassCharts registration/lesson marks. Likewise, the Attendance Assistant should be informed if a member of staff notices inaccuracies on the register(s). If a pattern of absence begins to emerge in the class register or on ClassCharts, this should be drawn to the attention of the Head of Achievement at the earliest opportunity
- Periodic random checks will be carried out by the Head of Achievement to ensure that pupils who are marked present are in their lessons.

Equality Policy compliant

\*NB: 'session' = half day