

Attendance Procedures for Parents



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| Springwest Academy | |
| Person(s) Responsible: | Principal |
| Status: | Non-Statutory |
| Date Approved: | October 2009 |
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| Review Period: | As and when required |

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, students and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular Home-School Newsletter;
- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through form/year competitions, attendance prize draw and certificates.
- Display all attendance on the school website.

- Run focus groups with students to show the school where improvements can be made.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical or family emergencies. Planned medical/dental appointments which should be organised outside of school hours.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with irregular attendance must be sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend for any reason, please inform us immediately, so that we can put the necessary support in place.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A student becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects. It is a parent/ carers’ responsibility to ensure that every measure is taken to immediately improve their child’s attendance.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. You may be asked to an Early Intervention meeting and targets for improvement will be agreed.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

The school will issue a series of three letters if your child’s attendance falls below 95%. The third letter will invite you to a meeting with the Principal to explain your child’s absence. If no improvement is seen, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

All our PA students will receive additional support through: a Pastoral Mentor or a Connexions worker; use of circle time; individual incentive programmes and participation in

group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us **by 8.30 am** on the first day of absence – Main Reception 0208 831 3000, Mandy Barrett, Attendance Officer, 0208 831 3019;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to Reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we may:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Achievement Co-ordinator (ACO), Senior Assistant Principal;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Education Welfare Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance & Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss

work and do not spend time with their form tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt the learning of others.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.30 am** and we expect your child to be in registration at that time.

Registers are marked by **8.50 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.00 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the ACO, Senior Assistant Principal, Principal and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in term time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off during term time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance by letter to the Principal. The Principal will only authorise holidays taken in term time under very exceptional circumstances. In the vast majority of cases, the applications for authorisation are not granted. If you do take an unauthorised holiday, you will receive a Penalty Notice.

If your child is taken away from the country for more than three weeks, they may be removed from the School Roll. You would then have to reapply for a school place through the Local Authority on your return.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and on the website.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 93% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve at least 95% because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

We monitor absences and punctuality on a weekly basis to show us where improvements need to be made.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Attendance Officer
Senior Assistant Principal

Pastoral Mentor
Year Achievement Co-ordinator

Form Tutor

Summary:

The School has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance and achievement.

Mariella Wilson
Principal
Summer 2017