



POLICY DOCUMENT

For use by all member schools

Attendance Policy

	Name	Date
v1.0 Written By	Gulcin Sesli - Co CEO	August 2024

1. Aims

- The Spring Partnership Trust is committed to providing the best possible educational experience to all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to fully benefit from education, regular attendance is vital and we will do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.
- It is the policy of our schools to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our schools will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.
- Our schools will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and of course a legal responsibility. There is a need to establish strong home/school links and communication systems that we can utilise whenever there is concern about attendance.
- If there are problems that affect a pupil's attendance we will identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents, pupils and other agencies to resolve problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a focused intervention aimed at returning the pupil to full-time attendance.
- A senior member of school staff has oversight for whole school attendance – see the completed template in Appendix B of the policy on each school website. They are responsible for ensuring registers are completed accurately, communication is made with parents where clear concerns exist, liaison is carried out with the Attendance Service and other appropriate agencies, the Headteacher is briefed about attendance issues, statistical returns for legitimate agencies are made as and when they are required, and records of concerns are kept.

Parents should note that 'It is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child is receiving a full time education in accordance with Section 7 Education Act 1996. Failure to ensure that your child attends school regularly and punctually can result in you being issued with a Penalty Notice or prosecuted for an offence contrary to Section 444(1) Education Act 1996'.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Promoting good punctuality
- Reducing absence, including persistent (90% and under) and severe absence (50% and under)
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school

attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Trust Board

The Trust board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance and punctuality across the Trust policies and ethos
- Making sure the Executive ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures and punctuality for the schools
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Executive
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance and punctuality strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis and comparisons to national data
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance and punctuality identified through data
- Evaluating targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.4 Designated staff dealing with attendance

Staff dealing with attendance are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

- Working with the school's attendance service and local authority to address attendance concerns, including persistent absence and punctuality
- Supporting the headteacher (or staff authorised by the headteacher) to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office as soon as possible after morning and afternoon registration.
- As a legal document, registers are kept on Arbor at all times. Any child arriving after the registers have closed, are late and a late mark is recorded on Arbor.
- Consistently promoting high attendance expectations with children and parents.
- Arranging conversations and meetings with parents where a child's attendance is becoming a concern.

Where concerns persist, teachers should liaise with the PSL and/or a Senior Leader where appropriate. Further action will be agreed to address the concerns, as outlined under 'Procedures'.

3.6 TAs

TAs are responsible for:

- Consistently promoting high attendance expectations with children and parents.
- Supporting teachers to have informal conversations with parents where a child's attendance is becoming a concern.

3.7 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls, emails and other communication from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Carry out first day calling when no message has been received by the parent
- Ensure any notes received from parents are recorded on the child's attendance record on Arbor
- Liaise with relevant staff about attendance concerns
- Produce attendance data as required

3.8 Other school staff

Other school staff will:

- Welcome children back to school
- Consistently promote high attendance

3.9 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day and on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence by the start of the school day on the first day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence as required), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

- Not remove their child from school for a leave of absence including a holiday

3.10 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Poor attendance disadvantages children. We aim to ensure that the children in our schools attend regularly and on time, and where this is not the case, staff follow a staged procedure designed to encourage consistent attendance.

The performance indicator by which we judge the success of our efforts is set each year by our average attendance figure.

While 100% attendance is clearly the ideal, in many cases legitimate illness or other factors can prevent it. Such attendance is, where it occurs, clearly "excellent". On the other hand, attendance which falls below 96%, where a child is known to be in reasonable health and there are no other extenuating circumstances, is poor and should give cause for concern. In order to ascertain the levels of individual children's attendance, we aim to ensure that a complete register check is undertaken every week, and where there is cause for concern, appropriate action shall be taken.

4. Principles

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.
- Complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and at the beginning of each afternoon.
- Encourage parents/carers to contact staff early on the first day of absence.
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.
- Work to ensure parents/carers recognise their vital role, and legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance.
- Identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and other agencies to resolve barriers to attendance.
- Provide appropriate support, signposting and referrals to outside agencies for any child requiring additional wellbeing or mental health support.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their individual responsibility in regard to school attendance.
- Attendance procedures will be regularly evaluated by senior staff and Governors and reported to Trustees.
- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued, send a clear message that if a pupil has been absent, they will be offered opportunities to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

5. Procedures

- Trust schools use Arbor, to support the recording, reporting and monitoring of attendance and absence.
- It is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent, before the start of the school day. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know

that the child is safe. Parents/carers should regularly update the school and inform on when their child is returning.

- First day calling. If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence, the school will contact the parent by telephone or other method of communication as appropriate.
- If a child remains unaccounted for, staff will make a home visit as appropriate, taking into account any safeguarding concerns for the child.
- Designated members of staff meet regularly, together with EWOs to monitor and review whole school attendance and individual pupils whose attendance is either declining, persistently absent or at risk of becoming persistently absent, severely absent or at risk of becoming severely absent. Attendance and absence data is regularly reviewed together with emerging and historic patterns, to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and this analysis is used to provide targeted support to pupils and their families.
- Letters will be sent to parents to alert them to their child's attendance where this is declining and/or a cause for concern.
- In addition, the regular attendance review meetings may result in home visits undertaken by staff, or parents being invited in for a more formal meeting with the Family Support staff, and a Senior Leader as appropriate.
- The school will work with parents to identify barriers, agree a plan of action and offer appropriate school support, signposting, involvement of other agencies (eg. School Health, Early Help), and/or a referral to EWO. The school will also implement other statutory interventions where appropriate including Attendance and Punctuality Contracts and Notices to Improve.
- The school will also ensure they plan and implement appropriate support to address any identified needs of the child, including SEN, disabilities, or mental or physical ill health.
- Requests for medical evidence will be made for absence due to illness, if the school considers the level of attendance and/or illness to be of concern.
- Where attendance remains a concern, the school may request a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued by the local authority, or submit a referral to the local authority for further action.

Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent of each child**.

The amount of the first penalty notice is £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

If neither of these sums is paid within these periods, the Local Authority may consider a prosecution for an offence contrary to Sec. 444(1) Education Act 1996.

Any second penalty notice is automatically charged at £160.

In a case where the national threshold for a penalty notice is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead by the Local Authority, usually a prosecution.

- Absence will be authorised for events such as illness, where medical evidence may be requested, and religious observance. **It is the school who must decide whether to authorise absence, not the parent/carer.**
- Pupils leaving school during the day for any reason, such as for medical appointments, must be collected by the parent/carer in person from the school office. The parent/carer should sign their child out using the Entry System, where a pass is printed. Parents/carers should sign their child back in again on this system if they are returning. Parents/carers should also provide school with written evidence of medical appointments if requested.
- Our Attendance Leaflet is given to all new pupils on entry and sent to parents/carers with their child's Annual School Report (see Appendix C).

- Attendance figures for the year are reported in every pupil's Annual School Report, including the total number of missed school days/weeks.
- Specific punctuality letters are sent to parents where this is a concern and meetings arranged as appropriate.
- General attendance and lateness reminders are included in regular school newsletters and communication with parents/carers.
- Rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality may include celebration assemblies, certificates, prizes, trophies, golden time – see Appendix B.

Term Time Leave of Absence or Holiday

- The Spring Partnership Trust does **NOT** permit leaves of absence during term time. Please note that the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**, which came into effect on 1st September 2013 make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- If a parent/carer wishes to request such leave, they should make a written application at the earliest opportunity. The Headteacher and/or senior staff will consider each request and inform the parent/carer as soon as possible in writing, whether the request has been granted or not. Where permission has been refused and the parent/carer proceeds with the leave of absence, this is recorded as unauthorised leave.
- If unauthorised leave during term time is taken, a Penalty Notice may be issued. A Penalty Notice is issued to each parent for each child that is taken out of school.

The national framework for penalty notices for unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 schools days) in any 10 week rolling period is as follows:

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil for unauthorised term time leave or holiday, will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second period of unauthorised term time leave or holiday in respect of the same pupil within a rolling 3 year period, will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

For a third period of unauthorised term time leave or holiday within a rolling 3 year period, a penalty notice will not be issued. The local authority will instead take further legal action, usually a prosecution.

- If the school believes a family holiday has been taken despite not receiving a request, the local authority will consider the school's evidence and may issue a penalty notice.

6. School Specific Information

See Appendix B for school specific information including start of the school day, relevant staff contacts, process to request a leave of absence.

7. Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and Attendance Service where appropriate.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

Also see Child Protection Policy.

8. Elective Home Education

If a parent advises they wish to educate their child at home, all Trust procedures should be followed – see Appendix A.

Appendix A - Elective Home Education (EHE) Request

This form should be initiated by the PSL (or relevant staff) when a parent advises they wish to home educate their child

School:

Child's Name:

Year Group:

Action	Completed by: Or reason for non completion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial conversation with parent by FLO//appropriate staff member Discuss reasons for home educating – any issues should be attempted to be resolved and notified to the HT immediately. Signpost parent to EHE service for further advice and guidance to enable them to make an informed decision. Add all info to 'Safeguard' 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange meeting for parent with HT to discuss further, including any SEN or safeguarding concerns. The meeting should include expectations of parent should they decide to home educate. Also provide parent with Local Authority EHE leaflet/information. https://www.bromley.gov.uk/special-educational-needs/educating-child-home Add all info to 'Safeguard'. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent to provide written confirmation of decision to home educate. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss any safeguarding and SEN concerns with HT. Consider if a Front Door Referral is required if there are specific safeguarding concerns. If the child has an EHCP, consult with the LA SEN department before making an EHE referral. After agreement from the HT, EHE referral made to the Local Authority together with parent's letter. Safeguarding and SEN information should be included in referral Add all info to 'Safeguard'. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter to be sent to parents confirming their request, support offered and submission of EHE. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise school office staff. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store child's file in separate secure location – specify location: 	

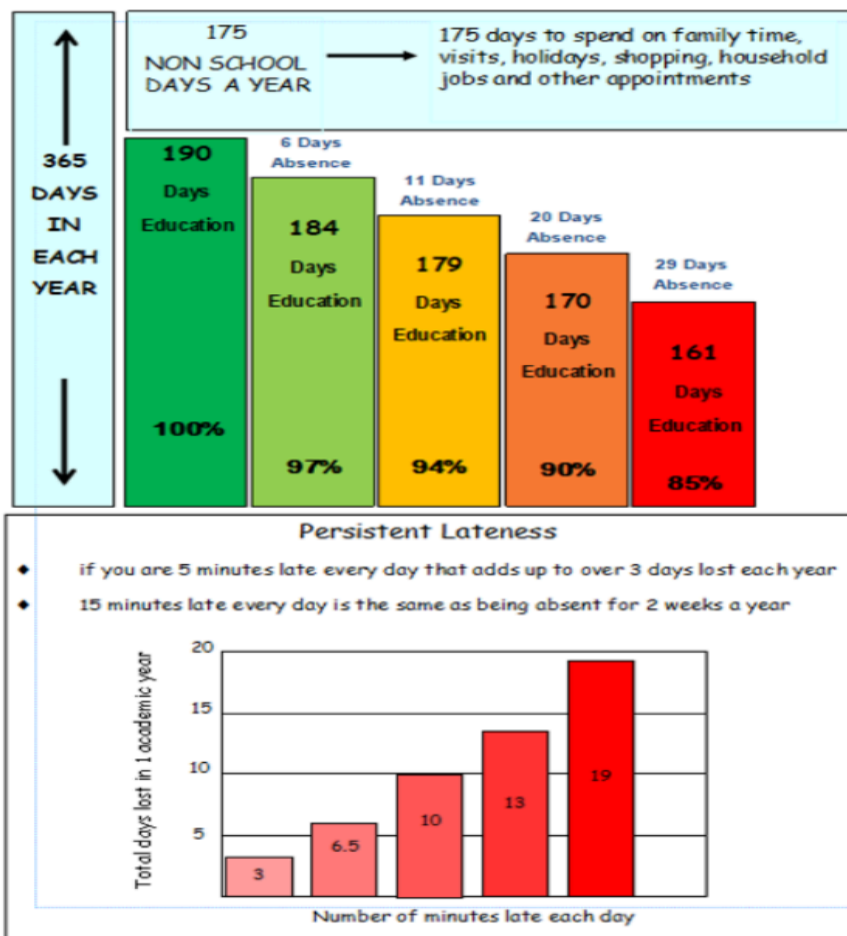
Once completed, keep this form in a secure file for future reference.

Appendix B – NAME OF SCHOOL Specific Information

(Please see policy on each school website to access the completed information)

The start of the school day is:	
Registers close at: (Children will then be marked as Late)	
U codes (unauthorised) are used for children arriving after:	
The end of the school day is:	
How to request a leave of absence:	
Concerns regarding attendance should be addressed with: Any further concerns should be addressed with:	Your child's class teacher in the first instance
The designated senior leader and attendance champion responsible for attendance is:	
Our school attendance incentives and rewards include:	

Appendix C



Your child's education is their future.

Don't waste it!

- Level 1** If attendance is 98-100% **OUTSTANDING** very well done! Your child is highly likely to be able to reach a good standard of achievement, enabling them to fulfil their learning
- Level 2** Attendance is 95-97% **GOOD** Your child is absent for less than 8 days but with over 40 hours of learning lost. They may reach a good standard of achievement, and fulfil their learning potential, if they are able to catch up on missed learning.
- Level 3** Attendance is 91-94%. **ACTION NEEDED.** Your child is absent for up to 19 days and missing over 100 hours of learning. This amount of absence will make progress difficult and reduce their level of achievement. **You will be referred to our Attendance Advisor and parents/carers may receive a fine.**
- Level 4** Attendance is 85-90%. **URGENT ACTION NEEDED.** Your child is missing up to 30 days, six weeks, which is 160 hours of learning lost. Missing this much time will make it extremely difficult for them to keep up in lessons, make progress and significantly reduces standards of achievement. **Parents/carers may receive a fine.**
- Level 5** Attendance is below 85%. **SERIOUS ACTION NEEDED.** This amount of absence will seriously affect learning potential, and seriously reduces standards of achievement. **Parents/carers may receive a fine and court action.**

HOLIDAYS - 2013 Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that Headteachers are unable to authorise holidays.

The deliberate taking of a leave of absence in term time without/against school permission, may result in parents being liable to a fixed penalty notice.

PUNCTUALITY- Being on time is also vital to your child's education. Arriving late is disruptive for your child, their teacher and other children in the class. Children can enter their classrooms from 8.40am, and doors close promptly at 8.50am. If your child comes through the front office, it is parent's responsibility to sign them in, and your child will receive a late mark.

Being late means missing out on learning.

5 minutes late every day adds up to 3 days lost learning each year!

15 minutes late each day is the same as being absent for 10 days each year!

30 minutes late each day is the same as being absent for 19 weeks each year!