Springwell School

Springwell



Every child has a voice

Attendance Policy

Last review: September 2026
Next review: September 2027

Names : Lisa Needham

Position : Headteacher

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RATIONALE

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy document.

We believe for children to learn most effectively, it is essential that they attend school on a regular basis, and the role of Springwell School is to ensure that this occurs whenever possible.

PRINCIPLES

At Springwell we will:

- Enable continuity and progression of teaching and learning through good attendance.
- Encourage good attendance through a positive and secure learning environment.
- Promote the importance of good attendance and celebrate success with parents and carers.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to facilitate good attendance.

AIMS

1. To ensure families feel confident to send their child to school, as a result of secure risk assessments and ongoing clear communication.
2. To provide a means by which the school can record and monitor attendance of the pupils/students and to intervene positively as required.
3. To have systems of following up all absences so that we can be clear which are legitimate, and which are unauthorised.
4. To provide clear protocols on absences within school terms.

    - Term time leave of absence is not authorised.
    - Generic family holidays during term-time are not authorised.
    - The school cannot grant extended leave of absence, **except in exceptional circumstances.**

Note: Southampton City Council actively discourages **all** leave of absence during term time and encourages all schools to adopt this policy.

5. To ensure that all absences are correctly identified, and clear distinctions are made which take into account the pupils/students' disabilities and/or special educational needs.
6. To ensure the school's Safeguarding Policy is upheld and fully adheres to the protocols determined to keep all children safe, which includes appropriate liaison with social care and the school's allocated School Attendance Support Officer.
7. To refer pupils and families to the appropriate support for attendance and wellbeing.

ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

Class Teacher will:

- Register pupils at 9.15am. Mark each pupil either present or absent – leave no blanks. Keep the register open until 9.30. If pupils arrive while register is open mark them 'Late' (L).
- Submit the register no later than 9.35 am.
- Staff check Arbor as to why a child in their class is absent.
- Stress to parents the importance of pupils being present and not missing school during parents evenings or meetings/phone calls with parents.
- Liaise with the Deputy Head / Assistant Head/ Attendance Lead about any pupils whose absences concern you.
- Discuss attendance with the child's family at Annual Reviews and Parents Evenings as appropriate, or at specific meetings arranged by the Headteacher/Deputy Head/Assistant Head if required.

Office Team/ARBOR Co-ordinator will:

- Sign in pupils who arrive after 9:15am, following doors being closed to walkers and pupils on transport.
- Ensure all registers are completed.
- Ensure all pupils are marked either present or absent and update system throughout the day as appropriate.
- Complete holiday forms as required, including data on current levels of attendance.
- Support Attendance officer as appropriate.

Attendance Officer will:

- Compile a list of the PA (persistence absence) pupils each half term and share with Headteacher/Deputy Head.
- Contact parents of PA (persistence absence) pupils on each day of absence.
- Contact parents on each day of absence where no contact is made with school.
- Contact and follow up with the Deputy Head Teacher/Assistant Head/Pastoral Team.
- Ensure attendance procedures are followed.
- Send absence letters at times identified in liaison with the Education Welfare Officer.
- Provide Headteacher with half termly attendance data and statistics.
- Provide half termly 90% attendance children (PA Persistence Absence) data for Headteacher.

Attendance Lead / Attendance Officer will:

- Meet with parents and pupils about attendance concerns.
- Liaise with Assistant Headteachers and School Attendance Support Officer regarding concerns about attendance involving other professionals as appropriate i.e., school nurse, school doctor, Jigsaw practitioners.
- Keep abreast of current legislation and developments regarding attendance and Truancy.
- Monitor progress in whole school attendance.
- Monitor implementation and effectiveness of attendance procedures.
- Develop attendance procedures and practice within the school.
- Report to the Governing Body on a regular basis.

REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Requests for leave of absence during term time, for example to take a family holiday, will not be agreed except where there are significant and extreme circumstances. Consideration will also be given where a child is receiving granted respite support.

Where a parent or carer wishes to request leave of absence during term time, the appropriate form (see below Appendix 1) should be requested from the school. A Headteacher will review this request, and where it is likely there are appropriate reasons to authorise the holiday, this will be confirmed, and a copy sent to the family home.

A request to authorise leave of absence must be made well in advance. If the leave of absence is unauthorised and attendance remains a concern, parents/carers may risk being issued with a penalty notice, or other action being taken jointly with the School and LA.

SPECIAL REASONS FOR ABSENCES

It is understood that disabled children and those with special educational needs may have greater levels of absence from school than their mainstream peers. If so, this is usually as a direct result of their impairments (attending therapy sessions or for surgical intervention for example) but it can often be the result of an indirect consequence of their 'condition'. For example: a child may experience a seizure just as the Transport arrives to take them to school, forcing them to miss it. The child's inability to attend school is not 'Illness', as once they had recovered from the seizure, he/she would have been ok to attend school but could not now get into school due to transport/mobility issues. Similarly, this is not a 'Medical' absence as the child was not attending hospital. Another example may be a student with extreme autism who is too distressed to leave his room following a difficult night: likewise, he is not 'ill' but is unable to attend the school because of his autism.

FAMILY HOLIDAYS

Springwell School recognises that some holidays can be viewed as 'exceptional circumstances' and interprets this as 'being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time'; therefore the 'exceptional circumstance' is much more likely to be a one-off unique situation. As an example of this we recognise that some families are given holidays by charitable organisations, and they would have little control over the date; this would be viewed as an 'exceptional circumstance'.

To address this, the school has developed a protocol via a 'leave of absence request form' in how it addresses Family Holidays in School Time. Families will be asked to request this form and send it back to the Headteacher of the school; when completing this form, the school asks parents/carers to give some thought to the 'exceptional circumstances' that they feel make it necessary for their child to be taken out of school during term time. This may include a child's behaviour, medical condition, or complex needs. **See Appendix 2**

In order to counteract the effects of missed teaching and learning, the school asks parents to suggest some activities that their child would enjoy completing whilst they are away. This may involve anything from bringing back a memento of a place they have visited, to keeping a diary of their time away, etc.

The school needs to make parents/carers aware that, if the Headteacher does not authorise the requested leave of absence and parents continue to remove their child on the requested dates, the school is legally required to notify the Local Authority who can potentially impose penalty notices.

We will not grant leave if:

- *A child's attendance over the previous 20-week period is less than 95% - even if any absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness.*
- *The period of leave coincides with the start of term, or near to or coincides with tests, SATS, exams or other significant events in the school calendar.*

When leave is granted, it will normally be for one holiday in any one school year (up to ten session/5 school days).

LATENESS

A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parents/carers of a pupil who is persistently late are guilty of an offence. The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if late arrival is not resolved. Persistent lateness can be as damaging to a pupil's school career as persistent absence. Pupils who arrive late disrupt not only their own education but that of others. Being persistently late may also lead to truancy. Where a situation at home makes it difficult for the pupil to arrive on time, the school will consider referral to an outside agency to provide family support and to improve punctuality.

MONITORING and FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

The school Attendance Officer keeps a record of all absences and closely monitors patterns and rates of attendance.
All unexplained absences are followed up as follows:

- Day 1: Attendance Officer makes telephone contact with parents / carers.
- Day 2: If contact has not been made, Attendance Officer attempts to contact emergency contacts on record.
- Day 3: If still no contact from parent / carer a home visit is carried by Attendance Officer to monitor and ensure the welfare of the child.

A member of the SLT, the Attendance Officer and School Attendance Support Officer meet to audit all attendance that falls below 90% on a termly basis.

Where there is unexplained absence, or increasing concern, a member of the SLT or the Attendance Officer will send a letter or meet with the parent or carer to discuss and agree how best to support school attendance.

REFERRALS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SUPPORT SERVICE

Where a parent/carer chooses not to engage with the school or where school actions have had little or no impact, a referral will be made to the School Attendance Support Service. Many cases of non-attendance can be resolved through effective partnership working with parents and carers, schools, and other agencies. However, if non-attendance cannot be resolved or parents and carers actively prevent or fail to ensure that their children access education then legal sanctions may need to be considered.

Please refer to Appendix 3: Education Support: Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced guidance and legislation to supplement existing sanctions, under Section 444 of the Education Act 1 996 and Section 36 of the Children Act 1 989 (Education Supervision Orders), to aid schools and Local Authorities to enforce attendance at school. This includes additional powers in the form of Fixed Penalty Notices for non-attendance, where appropriate. A Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to three per pupil per rolling three year period starting from the first penalty notice..

The issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence during an eight-week period.
- Unauthorised holidays in a half term period (at least 5 days or 10 sessions consecutively). In the case of separated parents, the Fixed Penalty Notice will only be sent to the parent, asking for leave of absence and taking the pupil on holiday.
- Unauthorised late arrival, after the close of registration, on 10 occasions or more during a half term period for pupils. School registers will close at 9:30am in accordance with the School Attendance Policy. A "U" code will then be used which denotes an unauthorised absence.

In the early stages of intervention, an SASO may form an opinion that the issuing of a Penalty Notice is appropriate, e.g., in cases where a parent persistently refuses to meet with either the school staff or SASO despite repeated written requests.

A formal written warning will be sent to the parent or carer informing them of the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. A period of 15 school days will be set within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence. At the end of the 15 school days' period if full-time attendance has not been achieved a fixed penalty notice will be issued by the Southampton City Council Legal Services.

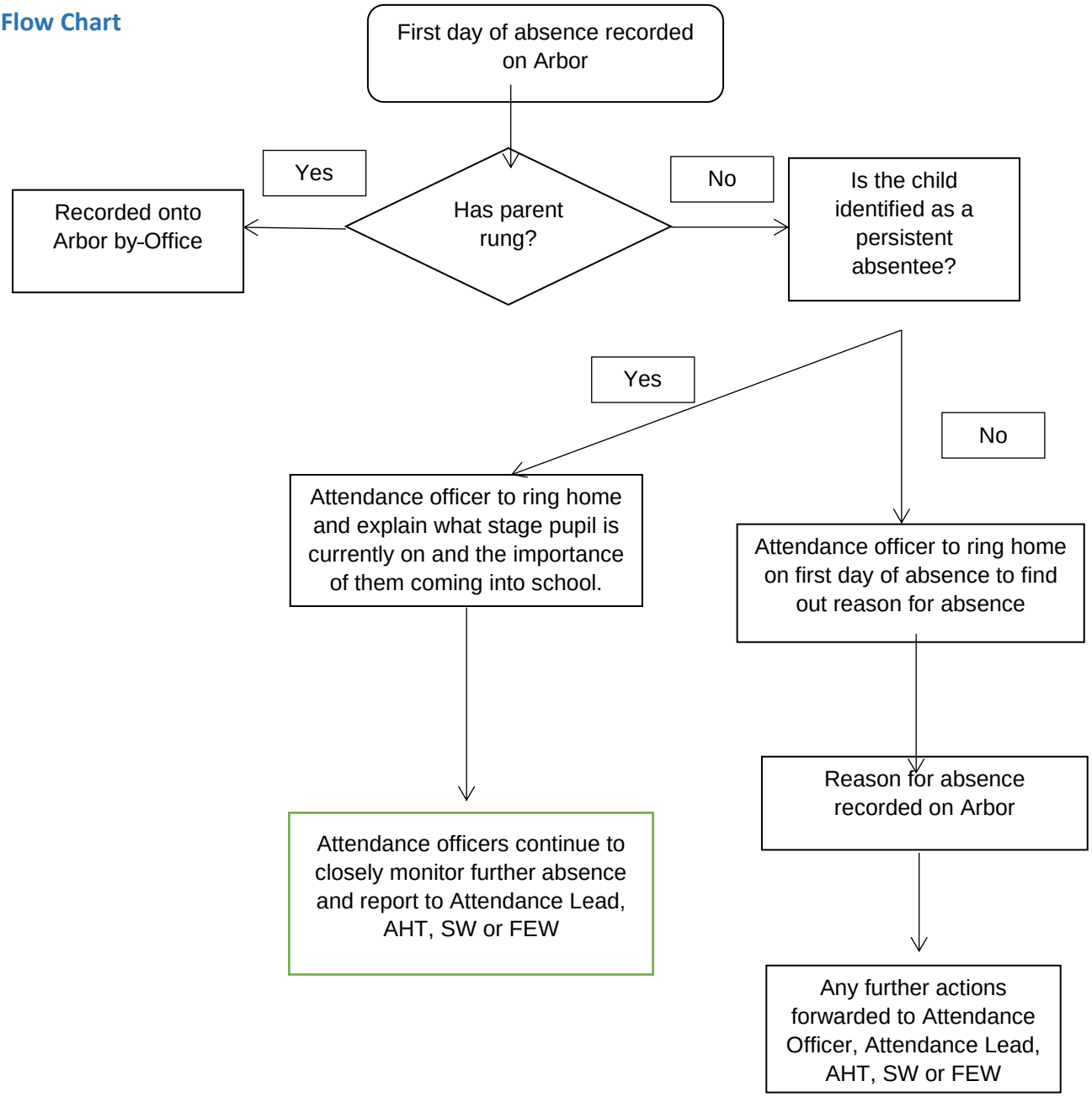
The school is committed to always working with parents and carers to resolve attendance issues. Most cases of non-attendance can be resolved through effective partnership working with parents, individual pupils, schools, and other agencies.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be monitored by the Leadership Team with a formal report on pupil attendance to the governors meeting from the Deputy Headteacher each term.

This report will outline any concerns in relation to pupil attendance and any impact of pupil attendance on progress over time. The report will outline the measures the school has made to address any such issues.

Appendix 1
Flow Chart



PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE – EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES 2026/2027

Parents/Carers/Guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their child/children's attendance at school. Good attendance is linked to higher achievement. Poor attendance can be the cause of under achievement. Under Government legislation, the Headteacher is only able to authorise leave of absence of a pupil during term time, if they deem the reason/s given for the leave of absence to be exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will consider your application using the information you have provided below, so please include as much information as possible. You will be notified of the Headteachers decision in writing.

Applications should be received at least three weeks in advance to allow consideration.

PUPIL INFORMATION

Forename	**Surname**	**Date of Birth**	**Year Group**	**Class**

Details of siblings at other schools that will be travelling: (Please note that we may contact these school/s in relation to this application).

Name of Siblings	**Current School/Schools**

I am applying for leave of absence for my child/children: **From To**	**Total number of school days absent:**
The absence cannot be taken outside of term time because (please explain fully):	
Name of City/Country being visited during the leave of absence? *Please provide outbound and inbound flight confirmations concerning the leave of absence.*	
Parent/s email addresses and contact Telephone numbers whilst on Leave of Absence.	**Email:** **Telephone No:**
Has your child had leave of absence in the last 12 months? If yes, please provide details/dates:	**Yes/No**

I submit the information above for consideration by the Headteacher:	**Signed:**
	Printed:
	Parent/Carer/Guardian (please delete as necessary)
	Date:

Leave of Absence Application Decision 2026/2027

FOR SCHOOL USE AND COMPLETION ONLY

PUPIL INFORMATION

Forename	**Surname**	**Class**	**% Attendance (over last 12 months)**

Dates the pupil/s are going to be absent:	
Number of school days the pupil/s are going to be absent:	
Contact made with sibling/s school/s (*date and time called, plus information gained*)	
Having considered this request carefully, my decision is the leave of application is:	
Invite parents/in for a meeting to find out further information regarding their application for Leave of Absence.	
Approved – the entire absence will be recorded as authorised (code C, C1 or P or J1 or R or T).	
Not Approved – the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (Code G or O) and the school will not request any further action to take place concerning this unauthorised absence.	
Not Approved – the absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence (Code G or O) and the school will request a warning letter be issued As this is the first unauthorised absence within a 3-year period.	
Not approved – the absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence (Code G or O) and the school will request a Final Penalty Notice to be issued as this is the second unauthorised absence within a 3 year period.	
Not approved – the absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence (Code G and O) and the school will request a prosecution to be instigated for the unauthorised absence as this is the third unauthorised absence within a 3-year period.	
Explanatory notes regarding this decision:	

Signed (Headteacher)	Date

APPENDIX 2

BACKGROUND - THE LAW

Compulsory school age is defined as between five years and sixteen years. The law states that all pupils of compulsory school age should attend school regularly to obtain maximum benefit from their education.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that: "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full-time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise." Section 444 further states that: "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law." 2013 LEGISLATIVE CHANGES - Amendments were made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

Term-time holiday: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 used to allow Head teachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Head teachers also used to be able to grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make it clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless it is for exceptional circumstances only. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Appendix 3

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE: WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

For all urgent & significant safeguarding referrals, go straight to the Children's Resource Service website

https://www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/children/child-social-care/childrens-resource-service/

Concerns about a pupil's absence (authorised or unauthorised) and reasons given.

Exhaust "in-school" immediate options and strategies (need to be recorded with minutes for evidence showing steps and actions to address problem). Should be undertaken by internal resource, e.g. Attendance Officer or by EWO (if directly purchased via Service Level Agreement).

EWS Engagement with family via home/school, telephone, virtual (if appropriate).

An Early Help Assessment or Plan can be completed at this stage (accessible on CRS website).

Strategies can be found on EWO referral form and on Targeted Support Meeting

Consider pathway depending on level absence – severe (50%) or persistent (90%). There could be single or multiple issues, other concerns, such as but not limited to, early help, social care, health needs, exploitation including employment, medical, SEND, young carer, bullying, other safeguarding matters.

Universal Level Activity

1 Brief enquiry/very early identification of attendance issues

School to contact link EWO after following guidance/advice. EWO may advise contacting CME Officer. See guidance: https://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/guidance-for-schools/general-guidance/inclusion-services/

EWO/CME Officer advises and agrees actions for the school or triggers referral: see 2 or 3

This could include a referral to the Children's and Families First Service

2 Emerging issues predominantly attendance only – potential for EWO referral

School begins "working out" issues affecting barriers to attendance with parent/carer & child

Raise any concerns initially with your link EWO; advice and guidance is provided at this point. These can be reviewed at the **termly Targeted Support Meeting** (previously attendance audits).

School complete Education Welfare Service Referral & Evidence Form, following discussion with EWO, and **ensuring checklist of strategies is complete** – send securely via ANYCOMMS for attention of EWO.

EWO receives agreed referral & evidence form, then completes agency checks. EWO then engages with family via home/school visit or virtually if appropriate, to complete initial investigation, outlines clear expectations and consequences for parent(s) if improved attendance is not secured.

EWO intervention in conjunction with other professionals and school to support improved attendance – **please ensure referrals include any other professional involved with the family.**

Investigation Review with parent/carer/young person, including other professionals if appropriate, to review actions and evidence – legal interventions; referral to CRS; or other intervention.

Legal Intervention (Fast Track process) to commence where appropriate.

Legal consultation – Magistrates/Family proceedings Court

3 Persistent and/or significant absence & other concerns incl. safeguarding

School to begin working with families and associated professionals on Early Help Assessment / improvement plan with parent/carer & child

Determine level of need using 'Pathways Document' in the Neglect Strategy. https://southamptonscp.org.uk/neglect-toolkit/

Complete an online referral form, please visit: **https://www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/children/child-social-care/early-help/**

Penalty Notices cannot be requested for open EWO cases – please refer to the PN Code of Conduct 2023/24 for the criteria for a PN.

If you want to find out more about the Children and Families First Service including information about Parenting Courses please call 02380 83 2300.

To make a referral to the CRS please visit the Southampton.gov.uk website: https://www.southampton.gov.uk/health-social-care/children/child-social-care/early-help/

Note – there is a single referral pathway for CRS and Children's and Families First.