



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Spring Meadow Infant and Nursery school is a member of the Ely Schools Partnership (ESP) and our school policy reflects the ESP vision of working in collaboration to facilitate participation and learning for all. Our aim is to provide a consistent approach to all aspects of learning whilst recognising the diversity of needs of the families within our community.

1. **Statement of Intent**

- 1.1 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 9:01am, 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 (9:00am). If a child is late, please sign them in at the school office. Registers close at 9:01am (in the afternoon 12:46 pm for Reception and 1.01pm KS 1) and parents need to sign in to safeguard their child. If a child arrives after the register has closed this will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as unauthorised if too frequent.

- 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 they cannot be taught and this does 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.

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.

- 3.2 Registers will be taken twice daily at 9:00am and 12:45pm for Reception and 1.00pm for KS1). Registers will close at 9:01am/12.46pm/1.01pm respectively.
- 3.3 Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the guidance contained in the register. Registers are reviewed with the EWO (Education Welfare Officer), whose responsibility is attendance, 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 family support worker, Katrina Wodehouse.
- 3.5 If a child is absent the class teacher 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 safeguarding grounds, the school will endeavour to make contact with the parent, after which an appropriate judgement regarding authorisation will be made. If parents are not contactable and do not respond to left messages by 10:00am, the school will ring home again, then all the given emergency numbers that the parent/carer has provided. If the child cannot be located, the school may visit the home. If there is no response at home a letter will be left to say the school has been to the house. A phone call may be made to the police, (or social worker if one is working with the family). These actions form part of our safeguarding duties.
- 3.6 The Deputy Head teacher will regularly collect attendance data and will use this data during meetings with the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO). These meeting will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify respective tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and the EWO. The local education authority deem attendance of less than 96% over a given period, as persistent absenteeism. Where absence falls below this acceptable level, the school will require evidence, medical or otherwise, for any illness or other absence from school.
- 3.7 The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance. The Head teacher and class teachers will communicate regularly with parents/carers on attendance matters

The chart below outlines actions that will be taken if a child's attendance falls below 96%

STEP 1	When a child's attendance falls below 96% we will:	Contact the parent by telephone to find out why the child has attended less than 96%.	Attendance improves – no further action	
		Send the parent a formal letter so the concern is made clear to the parent/s.		
STEP 2	If a child's attendance does not improve following the actions taken in step, we will:	A second letter is sent. A target setting meeting with the Deputy Head teacher is held to support the family. The parent is informed of the seriousness of the situation also and the requirement to meet targets within an agreed timescale.	Attendance improves – no further action	Attendance remains a concern Education Welfare Officer will meet with parent. Penalty notices or court action may follow
		Inform the parent that no further sickness absence will be authorised without medical evidence.		

- Certificates of attendance will be given to children with 100% attendance each term
- Weekly attendance figures will be shared with the children and coins can be earned to buy games for the class.
- An attendance cup will be awarded to the class with the highest weekly attendance.
- Personal encouragement or congratulation will be offered to individual children and classes.
- clear attendance information will be entered in the school brochure;
- 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.
- If a child has significant medical/health needs a 'Health Plan' will be produced.

3.8 Definitions

3.8.1 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 Head teacher 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.

3.8.2 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).

3.8.3 Circumstances in which Penalty Notices may be issued

The Government 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

Holidays taken within the school term 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, will 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. Where unauthorised holiday takes attendance below 90% and there are other unauthorised absences a penalty fine will be issued.

Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days) or more 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 an absence for a holiday or otherwise, at the bottom of the special leave of absence form, will serve as the penalty warning.**

A Penalty Notice Charge will be charged at £120 per parent, per child, reduced to £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days of issue. 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.

- Exceptional circumstances for absence will be considered on an individual basis but the following will not meet the criteria:
 - Cheaper holidays in England or abroad
 - Can't get a holiday together at any other time
 - 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

4.0 This attendance policy will be reviewed in January 2020 or following any further updates from the Local Authority.

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The table below applies particularly where attendance is unauthorised. Where patterns are forming, or the number of days off for illness is concerning.

Descriptor	Threshold attendance	Actual attendance	Whole days absent	PREVENTATIVE
Excellent	100%	190 days	0	
Unsatisfactory Identify pupils of concern and	95.99%	176.7 days	13.3	
See step 1 of chart If no improvement See Step 2 of chart				
Cause for concern	90%	171 days	19	PENALTY NOTICE
After identifying pupils of concern refer to the EWO where attendance falls between 89% and 86%. Possible referral for Penalty Notice.	89%	169 days	21	
Serious cause for concern	85% or lower	161.5 days	28.5	Court

Requirement to inform the EWO 89% or below.

Review date: January 2020