

 SPRING HILL HIGH SCHOOL	Attendance Policy
Person(s) Responsible:	
Approval:	Governing Body
Head Teacher:	Gary Edmunds
Policy Originator:	Gary Edmunds
Date Approved:	September 2020
Date of Review	September 2021

To be read in conjunction with: Safeguarding, Prevent and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Management Policy

This policy is based on the DfE guidance.

1.0 Policy objectives:

Attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all students can fulfill their potential. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind in their learning. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in school. The aims and objectives of the school's policy on attendance and punctuality are to enable maximum student attendance by encouraging parents to encourage their children to take full advantage of their educational opportunities with regular and punctual attendance at Spring Hill High School.

We therefore wish to :

- To establish and sustain improved levels of attendance above 91%.
- To ensure that policy and procedures on attendance and punctuality are effective and applied consistently in practice.
- To ensure that registers are completed accurately, consistently and reliably and that analysis of attendance data is used to provide an effective monitoring system and to inform practice and target resources.

- To identify students and groups of students whose absence or lateness is giving cause for concern and target resources to work toward the resolution of any difficulties being experienced.
- To reduce the percentage of persistent absentees (attendance below 91%).
- To promote an effective whole-school approach to the management of attendance where each member of the school community, including staff, governors, parents and students is aware of their roles and responsibilities and makes an effective contribution.
- To establish working partnerships with parents, the local authority, other support agencies and the wider community to address attendance issues.

2.0 Attendance and the Law:

This guidance summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, headteachers, school staff, governing bodies, students and parents.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

3.0 The Attendance Register:

Spring Hill High School follows Government guidelines on the maintenance of the attendance register contained in DFE Advice contained in 'School Attendance Guidance for Maintained Schools, Academies, Independent Schools and Local authorities November 2016':

Therefore:

The admissions register must contain the personal details of every student in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

4.0 Expectations of the School

- Rewarding good attendance through The Responsibility Points, the post 16 bursary and individual termly certificates.

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance; registers will be completed at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions.
- Early and sensitive contact with parents on occasions when a student is absent and where no appropriate reason for absence has been provided.
- Early and sensitive action to be taken to resolve any problems/issues of which the school is notified.
- Excellent and improved levels of attendance on the part of relevant students will be rewarded by termly attendance certificates and weekly class attendance awards. Attendance rates will form an integral part of celebrations in school.
- Positive staff attitudes to students returning, following absence, will be promoted.
- Regular evaluation of attendance procedures and levels of attendance by Senior Leadership Team
- Clear message to be sent that if a student is absent, he/she will be missed, including first day calling. This is completed by the site Leader of each school site.
- The Senior leadership, Lead Safeguarding officer and all members of the school community will be consulted in monitoring, reviewing this attendance policy.
- If a child is taken ill during the school day, the parent/carer will be notified and should then arrange to collect the child.

5.0 Expectations of Parents/Carers:

- To actively encourage their children to attend school on a regular basis.
- To answer morning phone calls from the site leader and inform and communicate if their child will not be attending school, with reason of absence.
- To ensure that children arrive at school in good time for registration, dressed appropriately and well prepared for the school day.
- To positively engage with the school and inform the site leader of any issue/problem which may hinder their child's regular attendance at school, including discipline and behaviour in school.
- Ensure that, unless absolutely necessary, any medical or dental appointments in respect of their child are made outside school hours but where such school-time appointments are made that evidence is provided to school staff. Parents should ensure that wherever possible, students return to school following such medical appointments.
- Parents are expected to cooperate with school staff and respond to calls and correspondence from Deputy Headteacher/Safeguarding Lead and Welfare Call in relation to the attendance of their child.

6.0 Expectations of students:

- That they will attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time for registration periods and lessons and be appropriately dressed and otherwise prepared for the school day.
- That they will inform a member of staff of any difficulty that may hinder their attendance at school.
- That their behaviour is such that it does not conflict with the day to day running of the school.
- That they will remain in school throughout the school day.

7.0 Students Moving to a New Address and/or School

Where the parent/carer of a student notifies the school that the student will live at another address, schools must record in the admission register: (a) the full name of the parent/carer with whom the student will live, (b) the new address, and (c) the date from when it is expected the student will live at this address. Where a parent /carer notifies the school that the student is registered at another school or will be attending a different school, schools must record in the admission register: (a) the name of the other school, and (b) the date of when the student first attended, or is due to start attending, that school.

8.0 Amendments to the Admission Register and Attendance Register

Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment. At Spring Hill High School this is automatically recorded on its electronic register.

9.0 Preservation of the Admission Register and Attendance Register

Every entry on the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of one year after the date on which the pupil has ceased to be on-roll. Information associated with admissions appeals shall be retained for a period of 5 years from the date the pupil ceases to be on roll. The above retention periods have been set out in Appendix 2 of the Data Protection Policy and are based upon guidance issued as part of the IRMS Data Protection Toolkit for Schools, created by a focus group aimed at advising schools on emerging attitudes within the sector towards the protection of school data.

10 Contents of Attendance Register

Spring Hill High School will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the fifth session of the 5th session immediately after lunch. On each occasion it must be recorded whether every student is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

10.1 Spring Hill High School uses approved attendance codes to record the attendance or absence of its students as detailed in DFE Advice contained in 'School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities August 2020' .

11 Authorised Absence from School

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

12 Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence, or no reason has been given.

13 Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' 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 and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

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 parents will be informed of this immediately.

15 Absence Procedures:

If a child is absent parents/carers must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible (by 9.30 a.m.) on the first day of absence;
- Send a note on the first day children return with an explanation of the absence, if they have not already telephoned the school and had a reason for absence recorded on the register.

16 Tracking Absence:

- Absence reports are produced on a daily basis for the first day contact person to telephone the home or a mobile if a message had not been received.
- If an acceptable reason for absence is given and accepted by the school the absence may be marked as “authorised”. The school are under no obligation to accept the reason given for absence, when there is doubt as to its validity.
- The Headteacher will keep under review all students whose attendance falls below 90% and keep under consideration reasons given for the absence. This will be reviewed as to whether the school should consider no longer authorising absence.
- If any child’s attendance at the school falls below 91% and the absence is unauthorised, the Local authority may be asked to intervene.
- The following three groups will be used for tracking on a termly basis:
Below 90% – persistent absentees
90-92.9% - cause for concern
93-94% - below average attendance

17 Actions to address concerns:

The school’s target for attendance is 95% and we strive to ensure every student meets it. The following actions are taken if a student's attendance becomes a cause for concern.

- Parents are reminded by our newsletter and daily calls that 95% is our target attendance.
- If attendance falls below 91% a meeting will be arranged to discuss the matter with the parent’s/carer’s and an action plan created to address the issue. At this point relevant agencies involved with the student will be notified (eg SENAR, social worker, LACES) that attendance is being monitored and action is being taken to improve it.
- Following this if attendance does not improve a judgement will be made by the school’s DSL as to whether a safeguarding referral needs to be made.

17.1 Missing From Education:

Schools have a vital role in safeguarding students. Occasionally there may be an immediate concern that, regardless of a student's attendance total, will require an urgent and robust response. If parents and carers cannot be contacted about absence or there are concerns about the reasons given the following actions will be taken.

ACTION 1: On the first day of absence there will be a phone call to the parent/carer's home. If there is no response it will be logged and recorded as an unauthorised absence.

ACTION 2: If there is no contact on the second day of absence two staff will complete a safe and well visit to the student's home.

ACTION 3: If the safe and well visit does not provide satisfactory reasons for the absence or the student has still not been accounted for the matter will pass to the DSL who will make a referral to Social Services/MASH.

If there is sufficient reason to be concerned about the student's welfare an immediate call to the police will be ACTION 1.

17.2 Exclusion:

If a student is excluded it will be for no longer than five days. The student's absence due to exclusion will be marked as an exclusion on the attendance register.

18.0 Special Circumstances for an agreed absence:

18.1 Placing a student on a part-time timetable:

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a student's individual needs. For example where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a reintegration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. In agreeing to a part-time timetable Spring Hill High School has agreed to a student being absent from school for part of the week or day, and therefore must record it as an authorised absence.

18.2 Study Leave:

Spring Hill High School does not support study leave.

18.3 Holiday in Term Time:

Term time holiday will only be authorised in the most exceptional of circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher. As a norm, permission for a holiday will only be granted in the most exceptional circumstances.

19 Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have two parent /carers contact numbers at all times.

20 Registration:

- Teaching staff are required to mark the registers at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. This is a legal requirement.
- Individual members of staff are responsible for the security of the register/electronic folders used to mark the registers.
- The register is a legal document in the Education (student Registration) Regulations 2006. Any removal of a child from the register must comply with Regulation 8.

20 Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:

- The Headteacher to communicate the policy to the school community and to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably.
- School Governing Body to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy. Regular report on school attendance figures for Governing Body Meetings
- Headteacher, Senior Managers, Teaching and Non Teaching staff to be aware of this policy and implement it accordingly.
- Staff to support and uphold the policy.
- Parents/carers to support their children and work in partnership with the school.
- Students abide by the policy.
- The named member of staff with lead responsibility for this policy is: Gary Edmunds

Appendices – Absence Letters

1. Leave of absence refusal
2. Leave of absence granted
3. Late arrival
4. No notification of reason of absence
5. Attendance below 94%
6. Attendance below 93%
7. Persistent absentee (90% attendance and below)

Date:

Appendix 1

Dear

Re: D.O.B.

Address:

I am in receipt of your request for a leave of absence during term time and thank you for informing us of your intentions. Unfortunately I have been unable to authorise your request in line with the Education (student Regulations) Regulations 2006 and 2013.

I respectfully remind you that should you proceed with the leave contrary to this decision, it will be recorded as unauthorised and could result in referral to the Education Investigation Service or the closest local authority equivalent, which is the authority's statutory intervention team.

Referral to this team could result in sanctions such as a warning of Fixed Penalty Notice in the first instance.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 2

Date:

Dear

Re: D.O.B.

Address:

Thank you for your request for a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. This has been accepted and your child's absence will be authorised for

.....

(date/s). Any additional days would remain unauthorised.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 3

Date

Dear

Re: D.O.B

Address

Following routine monitoring of all students punctuality, it has been identified that your child has arrived late for school on more than 2 occasions, during the previous month. I would like to bring to your attention that when your child is late for school, they miss valuable learning time.

Quite often a particular subject is affected, which can then result in the child falling behind. Late arriving children also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage further absence. Late arriving children are also often less settled and happy in school.

Good routines within the home are essential to assist children in establishing and maintaining punctuality. We rely on parents to assist their children in formulating routines and we would ask that should you be experiencing difficulty ensuring your child arrives at school on time, that you contact school on (0121) 384 4319 to arrange a meeting to discuss and resolve the difficulties.

Please be aware that arrival after the close of register at 9.30 a.m. is recorded as an unauthorised late. This is an offence in law, which could result in enforcement proceedings if the late arrivals were to persist.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 4

Date:

Re: D.O.B

Address:

Dear

You will be aware that Spring Hill High School's attendance policy stipulates that parent/guardian should contact school before 9.30am on the first day of absence.

Unfortunately your child's recent absence has been recorded as unauthorised on the school's register, as a result of no explanation being provided.

We require you to complete the form below and return it to school at your very earliest convenience giving the reason for absence. We must have a reason within ten days of the absence. If not the absence will remain unauthorised.

Please be aware that unless you provide valid medical evidence, any authorisation of absence remains at the school's discretion.

Thank you in anticipation of your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Childs Name: -----

School Site : -----

Date of absence: -----

Reason for absence: -----

Childs GP contacted: Yes /No

Parent Name: (Print) -----

Parent Name: (Signature) -----

Current Date: -----

Appendix 5

Date

Dear

Re: D.O.B

Address

Following routine monitoring of all students' attendance at school, it has been identified that your child's attendance is below 91%. This is below school targets and below average attendance at Spring Hill High School.

We accept that there may well be obvious reasons for absence, such as illness but we have a duty to inform you that your child's attendance is now below average.

We hope that by bringing this to your attention you can support your child and the school to ensure your child gains the greatest benefit that they can from their education, by regular school attendance.

However, if needed, please feel free to contact school on 0121 384 4319 to book an appointment so that you can discuss any issues or concerns you feel may be impacting on your child's ability to establish and maintain a regular attendance pattern.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher
Appendix 6

Date

Dear

Re: D.O.B

Address

Dear

Your child's attendance is now below [%].

This is well below the school's average attendance and is detrimental to your child's academic and social achievements.

Should your child have further absences they should be accompanied by medical evidence to ensure authorisation. This can include a practitioner note, appointment card and/or labelled medication. This will remain in place until your child's attendance reaches 95% this academic year.

If [name of student's] attendance fails to improve, the school will inform and provide evidence to the Local Authority of the persistent absence.

Should you require any further information or wish to discuss attendance issues, please do not hesitate to contact the school on 0121 384 4319

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 7

Date

Dear

Re: D.O.B

Address

Dear

You will be aware that we have contacted you previously to inform you of school's concerns in respect of your child's absence from school.

Your child's attendance at school has deteriorated further and they are currently only achieving -----% attendance. As a result of this, your child has now moved into the persistent absentee (PA) bracket (90% and below).

Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to your child's education and will seriously affect their learning. Spring Hill High School is committed to ensuring your child achieves their full potential and recognises that this can only be accomplished with your assistance and your child's full attendance at school.

Whilst any child may be absent from school due to illness, we recognise that sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for a variety of reasons. We wish to support you and assist your child in establishing a regular attendance pattern at school and would ask that you contact me to arrange a mutually convenient meeting to discuss any barriers to your child's school attendance.

Please be aware that should you fail to contact me and your [name of student's] attendance deteriorate further, a member of staff will visit you at home. The Local Authority will also be informed for their consideration of enforcement proceedings.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Dear....

We are writing with reference to (student name) attendance at school. His/her attendance for the last academic year was 63% which is significantly below the government required target of 95%. His/her attendance at the beginning of the academic year 2017-2018 to Wednesday 13 September currently stands at 30% with 4 of 12 possible attendances. These attendance figures are of significant concern.

Spring Hill High School are accountable to Birmingham Local Authority for (student name) academic progress alongside his/her safety and well being. We are required to update Birmingham Local Authority monthly with all student's attendance data.

You have notified school when (student name) is going to be absent and the reason for this has, for the most part, been illness. As (student name) attendance is over 20% below the government requirements it raises issues as to whether (student name) would benefit from interventions, consultations with health professionals to establish if there are any ongoing health issues which may require medical intervention, which could in turn help towards improving his/her attendance at school.

Attendance at 63% effectively means that (student name) is not engaging with the equivalent of over 1 days education every week which studies show will have a significant negative impact on his/her academic achievement.

In order to review (student's name) attendance and identify strategies that could support improved attendance we would like to invite you to a meeting to discuss how best to move forward and support (student name) placement at Spring Hill High School.

The meeting date is At 141 Wood End Lane, Erdington, Birmingham, B24 8BD.

Ratified by Governors: September 2020

Name: Barbara Scrivens

Role: Chair of Governors

Date:

Signature: