

Spring Lane School

School Attendance Policy

2023 - 2024



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 At Spring Lane School we expect all pupils to:
- Restart and re-engage with school with improving attendance
 - Repair gaps in learning and trust with adults through improved school attendance
 - Rise in attendance and engagement over a sustained period
 - Route successful pathways to future transitions and adulthood through improved school attendance
- 1.2 We believe that attending school is key to enabling children to make the most of the opportunities we offer to prepare them for their future, whilst providing a safe space for them in the immediacy to overcome individual challenges.
- 1.3 We will work in partnership with our families to identify the reasons for poor attendance supporting them in addressing any barriers to attendance for their child.
- 1.4 Promoting good attendance is a matter for the whole school community. This policy sets out our expectations and our approach. Our approach takes into account the Department for Education's guidance (May 2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance' which applies from September 2022, whilst recognizing our designation as a PRU and SEMH Special for some pupils, who need a different approach to help them access education.
- 1.5 Our approach to securing good attendance is based on support first and in line with Ofsted's research, which can be summarised as *'Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate.'* Whilst we remain very different from our mainstream counterparts, we engage with the local authority, their services and strategies to improve the attendance of our young people.
- 1.6 Every pupil should be able to learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers.
- 1.7 In the case of specific illnesses that require pupils to be kept off school, parents should follow public health advice to ensure the wellbeing of the whole school community. These illnesses are Chickenpox, Diarrhoea and Vomiting, Impetigo, Measles, Mumps, Scabies, Scarlet Fever and Whooping Cough – see ['How long should you keep your child off school – checklist poster'](#)
- 1.8 This policy will be applied consistently and fairly. In applying this policy, we will take into account the needs of individual pupils.
- 1.9 This policy is supported by other school policies and procedures e.g., admissions, safeguarding and child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and inclusive practice.

- 1.10 This policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010, the Race Relations Act 2000 and the 1996 Education Act.

2 Expectations

- 2.1 It is our responsibility to maintain a culture that promotes improving and good attendance which is supported by consistently applied routines.
- 2.2 Our dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance is Will Pacey
- 2.3 Other staff in school who support attendance on a day to day basis are Site Leads and our attendance officer, Jess Spencer.
- 2.4 Staff who can provide support on attendance are Jess Spencer, Will Pacey, all site leads, the Senior Leadership Team and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. The school recognises that attendance is central to safeguarding and is everyone's responsibility to contribute positively to.
- 2.5 Parents/ carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age engage with their education offer to meet their child's needs, by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 2.6 We are committed to working with parents to promote positive attendance. We expect all our **parents** to:
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
 - Contact the school as soon as possible if your child is absent to let us know the reason for the absence and the expected date of return. This should be followed up with a written note as soon as possible
 - Avoid unnecessary absences. For example, pre-planned medical/ dental appointments should take place outside of school hours.
 - Inform us of any change in circumstances that may impact on your child's attendance.
 - Support us by becoming involved in your child's education, acknowledging the value of education and the importance of children receiving the same messages from home and school
 - Work with us to address any barriers to attendance for your child including attending all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- 2.7 We expect all our **pupils** to:
- Be aware of when they should attend school

- Attend all lessons on time and be ready to accept the challenge
- Speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- Communicate with parents/ carers to encourage a written explanation to be shared with school to explain any absence that has happened or is foreseen
- Follow the school procedures

3 Daily routines

3.1 At Spring Lane School our staff and emotionally available adults are ready to meet and greet pupils at their designated entrances at each school site.

At Radcliffe, our Key Stage 3 provision, this begins at 8.55am each day.

At Park House, our Year 10 and Year 11 EBSA/ trauma provision, this begins at 8.55am each day.

At Milltown House, our Year 11 vocational provision, lessons start from 9.00am each day, but access to those lessons is rota-driven, around access to Alternative Provision and bespoke timetables

3.2 Attendance registers are taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session.

3.3 The morning register will open and be taken at 8.55am at check-in until 9.15am (20 minutes) Any pupil arriving after this point will be deemed late and must give a reason for lateness at entry.

3.4 If arrival is before 10.00am then the pupil will be recorded as late (Late **before** the close of register), this period is 45 minutes in duration.

3.5 The school register will officially close for each pupil 45 minutes after their proposed start time. Any pupil arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session (Late **after** the close of register). The school will make contact home to check on the child's welfare and speak to parents/carers regards non-attendance.

3.6 Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in further action being taken to support improved attendance

3.7 Our afternoon session begins at 12.00pm

3.8 Our normal school day ends at different times per site

At Radcliffe, our Key Stage 3 provision, lessons finish at 2.20pm Monday to Thursday, 2.00pm on a Friday.

At Park House, our Year 10 and Year 11 EBSA/ trauma provision, lessons finish at 2.20pm Monday to Thursday, 2.00pm on a Friday.

At Milltown House, our Year 11 vocational provision, lessons finish at 3.00pm Monday to Thursday, 12.00pm on a Friday, but access to those lessons is rota-driven, around access to Alternative Provision and bespoke timetables

4 Reporting Absence

4.1 If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school number and follow the prompts on reporting an absence. This should be on the first day of absence providing a reason for the absence and the expected date of return.

4.2 If the absence continues, parents should contact Jess Spencer, via 0161 724 2900 **day of absence** to identify the reason for absence and the expected date of return.

4.3 Where absence is recorded as unexplained, a reason for the absence should be obtained, in writing, by no later than 5 school days after the session.

4.4 If a child is absent, and we have had no contact from the parent to provide a reason for the absence, we will:

- Activate first day calling procedures after the register is closed or 45 minutes after their due attendance time
- If there remains no contact then a further telephone call will be made later that morning to the parent and, if no response, a call will be made to the pupil's other emergency contacts
- If we cannot contact a parent and are concerned about the pupil then, a home visit may be carried out by either Jess Spencer our attendance officer, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or another trusted adult, if the family is supported by a social worker then the social worker will be informed of the absence.

4.5 If we have concerns around a pupil's safety, we may also visit the home of the pupil or request a welfare check to be made by the police.

4.6 We will telephone home if a pupil leaves school without permission, at which point the child will come under parental responsibility. We will endeavour, using our staff and resources to keep that child safe, which may mean keeping a line of site at all times, verbal communication and/or physical intervention if the child is presenting a risk to themselves or others.

5. Requesting leave of absence

- 5.1 A leave of absence will only be granted (authorised) under exceptional circumstances. It is therefore unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. In making our decision we will take into account the specific circumstances and context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. Requests for a leave of absence should be made in writing to the head teacher giving as much notice as possible. An email should be addressed to the Headteacher, Mr J Bradley to springlane@bury.gov.uk

6 Managing and Supporting Attendance

- 6.1 We will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance through these means,
- Telephone call
 - Letters
 - School reports
 - Home visits
 - Reports to agencies – SEND, social care, LAC Team
- 6.2 We value and recognise the importance of good attendance. We use the our school data system (Edudek) to update all parties on school attendance, so that key adults, form tutors, key workers can all 'nudge' pupils and their achievements regards attendance.
- 6.3 We will regularly analyse attendance data to track attendance. We will also analyse specific sites, groups, classes, year groups to inform our strategy in promoting good attendance. We centre our analysis on value-added. Some pupils arrive at the school with significant attendance issues, and whilst their profile may still need some work, they may have made great gains from a previous school profile.
- For example, Child A may have an attendance profile of 52%, however their previous school attendance was 26%. Child A's attendance is not particularly good and below school average for our setting, yet Child A has doubled their attendance profile from previous school, which will be celebrated.*
- 6.4 Our approach to attendance management is based on targeted support and intervention first. Our pupils normally start with us with poor attendance profiles, after long periods of disaffection and exclusion, or mental health issues that affect attendance to school. Therefore, unlike our mainstream counterparts, we are looking to build pupils up, rather than prevent them 'falling down' in their attendance profile. We will regularly analyse attendance data for the following:
- To measure the value-added that we have impacted o the pupil from previous education experiences

- To celebrate pupils who have either positively impacted their value-added score, or are Band A attendance profile
- To identify pupils who are at risk
- To identify pupils who may need more support

6.5 Our strategy for using data to target specific groups and work on attendance is to Band pupils, based on their overall attendance profile, and refresh this every half term.

BAND A	80%-100%	An excellent attendance profile, that is celebrated and rewarded in school by form tutors and SLT
BAND B	65%-79.9%	An above average attendance profile for this setting, pupils are re-engaging and restarting, stretched by form tutors
BAND C	40% - 64.9%	An attendance profile that needs support with the pupil and families, interventions needed and safeguarding
BAND D	25% - 39.9%	An attendance profile that needs interventions with the pupil and families, plus frequent safeguarding checks
BAND E	0% - 24.9%	An attendance profile that requires significant intervention, signposting and regular safeguarding checks

6.6 We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils or cohorts of pupils that need support and interventions. We will efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.

6.7 If we have concerns about a pupil's attendance and/ or their punctuality then we will work in partnership with parents to support improvements. This may involve a meeting in school to support the family in identifying, and addressing, the barriers to attending school and/ or attending school on time.

6.8 We recognise that poor attendance is an indicator of difficulties and trauma in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. We endeavour to support our pupils and families where this is apparent and will use our referral pathways and induction pathways to ascertain as much information as possible on a pupil to best inform the school of individual need and adaptations needed. **Our aim is to support the restart and re-engagement of pupils trust and value in education.**

6.9 A lot of our pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. They have significant barriers preventing atypical excellent or very good attendance, these include:

- Permanent Exclusion from School
- Failed/multiple moves between schools
- A broken social contract between parents and education system
- Mental Health of pupil and/or parents
- Emotional Based School avoidance
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Anxiety, self harm, suicidal ideation
- Financial constraints

6.10 For all bands of attendance, we to reduce the challenges of with various levels of support, such as:

- A curriculum that is suited to need
- Emotionally available adults to all pupils
- Developing trauma informed practice
- An informative induction to ascertain pupil voice, parent voice, histories and need
- Re integration packages following induction to restart and re-engage
- A school focus on the whole child and their personal development, to overcome SEMH barriers
- An excellent safeguarding approach with well-established links of support
- Form Tutor support
- Pupil voice activities
- PSHRE Teaching
- Rewards that celebrate engagement
- Wider agency support and mentoring

For Band E and Band D attendance, we would execute more targeted intervention, such as:

- Meetings with parents and Early Help (see 6.11)
- Home collection by attendance officer
- Taxi to and from school
- Regular home visits, plus escalated to Senior Leadership Team
- Designated casework from an Attendance and Engagement mentor/ Youth Worker
- Home tuition to re-engage with school adults
- Explore complimentary AP
- Meeting with SEND team and a review

6.11 Working with parents, we will identify pupils who need support from wider partners and will make the necessary referrals as quickly as possible. With parental consent, this may include exploring Early Help support through the completion of the 'Story So Far' tool, or through discussion within a team around the school meeting. This will be the recommended pathways prior to any statutory and legal action set out in section 7.

6.12 **We will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, or where a child's mental health is being affected by the expectations of full-time school attendance, the use of bespoke timetables for an agreed amount of time will be used to re-engage and repair. This is in line with recent DfE guidance set out in 'Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance' (DfE, February 2023).** When this is agreed, attendance marks will not work against the individual pupil, and their attendance expectations and marks will be assigned accordingly. This intervention is being used to support, not punish.

For example, if a Child A is asked to start at 10.40am, they will be marked present if they arrive on time for their morning registration, up until 11am.

Late if they arrive up to 45 minutes after their intended start time and U code (absent after registers have closed) thereafter.

The school register will officially close for each pupil 45 minutes after their proposed start time. Any pupil arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session (Late after the close of register). The school will make contact home to check on the child's welfare and speak to parents/carers regards non-attendance.

6.13 If we have any concerns about the welfare and wellbeing of a pupil then, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities, we will make any necessary referrals.

6.14 If we have been unable to contact the family, and have not seen the pupil, then we will inform the Local Authority so that joint enquiries can be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures

7. Statutory action

7.1 After we have exhausted our intervention routes set out in 6.10 to 6.12, we will work with Bury local authority to use the full range of legal interventions available to us to protect our pupils' right to an education. These are:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices (see section 8)

7.2 Decisions on which intervention to take will be made on a case-by-case basis after considering the individual circumstances of the family.

8 Fixed penalty notices

8.1 School and the local authority will have regard to our safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

8.2 Fixed penalty notices will be served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure that their child regularly attends the school. Fixed penalty notices will be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence/s, which should usually be the parent or parents with day to day responsibility for the pupil's attendance.

8.3 We will only use a fixed penalty notice, in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, where support to secure regular attendance has not been successful. Fixed penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised holiday in term time.

8.4 Fixed penalty notices can be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion the days that the child must not be present in a public place.

9 Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Headteacher and Governing Body will review this policy every year and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Adopted by Spring Lane School On 1st January 2023

Chair of Governors 

Headteacher 