

Attendance Guidance for parents/carers

Springfield Academy sets high standards for pupil attendance and expects pupils to arrive on time each day, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment. It is not just that Springfield Academy monitors attendance, it is the law that children between the age of 5 and 16 attend school and, if they do not, the Local Authority has powers to impose a Penalty Notice (fine).

Late arrival

Pupils should arrive on time every day. Springfield Academy day starts at 8.45a.m. and it is open to pupils/students from 8.35a.m. If your child is going to be unavoidably late, please let us know by telephoning 01325 248153. Any late arrival is recorded in registers on a daily basis and where there is a pattern of lateness parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the problem. Ongoing and repeated lateness is classed as unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal action.

Collecting your child at the end of the day

If you collect your child from school, it is important they are collected promptly at the end of the day. If you are going to be unavoidably late, please let the Academy/School know by telephoning 01325 248153.

Absence

If your child is absent because they are unwell or because of an emergency **you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence by calling 01325 248153
- Send a signed note in on the day your child returns to school with an explanation of the absence – even if you have already telephoned us.

If a letter or phone call is not received to explain an absence, it will be treated as unauthorised.

If your child is absent and you have not called the Academy;

- We will telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.
- The Trust Attendance Officer or the Springfield Family Support Worker may be directed to make a home visit on the first, second or third day of absence.

Continued or on-going absence

Absence creates gaps in learning and research shows these gaps affect attainment. If your child's attendance falls below 95%, you will receive a letter offering support/intervention to improve attendance.

If attendance falls below 90% (which is the equivalent of missing three weeks of school), this is classed as Persistent Absence by the Department for Education. If school identifies that a child's attendance is causing concern, communication will be sent home to raise parent/carers awareness of this in order to prevent it from falling further. Regular communication will be sent by school to provide updates around a child's school attendance when necessary.

We are required by law to report unauthorised absences to the Local Authority, who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. The resulting fine is £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. A fine can be issued for each absence.

Where a child is not regularly attending school, the Local Authority has a duty under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to serve a notice or school attendance order. It also has powers under Sections 444, 444A and 444ZA of the Act to bring legal action against parents/carers to enforce attendance at school.

Holidays in term time

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off school to go on holiday. Legislation produced by the Department for Education in September 2013 states that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In the majority of cases an absence from school to go on holiday will be treated as 'unauthorised'.

If you would like the Academy/School to consider a request for a holiday in term time, please request a form from school.

Penalty notices (fines) for non-attendance

Unauthorised absence for holidays in term time may carry a fine, which will be issued by the Local Authority.

Fines of £120 per parent/carer may be issued, by the Local Authority

where unauthorised absence of **3 days or more** has been taken during term time.

If the fine is not paid within 28 days a summons can be issued by the Local Authority to appear in Magistrates' Court. Any child who is absent from school due to a holiday will miss out on important learning and will fall behind with school work.

Further information about fines can be found at:

<http://www.darlington.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-years/support-for-parents-and-pupils/attendance/>

Child Missing

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of the absence is always required.

Third Day Absence:

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parent/carers, after three days of absence, the Academy is required to start 'child missing in education' procedures as set by Darlington Borough Council guidance. We will make reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family etc. Again, the Trust Attendance Officer or Springfield's Family Support Worker may be utilised to try to establish contact.

Ten Days' Absence:

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then Darlington Borough Council is notified that the child is at risk of missing. Children's services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Consequently, it is vital that the Springfield Academy has the most up to date contact details for parents/carers.