SPRINGBOARD EDUCATION

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT
This policy describes the importance Springboard attaches to ensuring a high level of attendance. The practices incorporated into this document have evolved as a result of constant review and consultation with staff, parents, education welfare service, and students.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK
The policy is based upon guidance from:

A. DfE School Attendance Guidance August 2020
B. The Education Reform Act 1988
C. OFSTED recommendations.
D. The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) National Forum for Values in Education and the Community Consultation Document (November 1996).
E. West Sussex LA Policy on Attendance.
F. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

OVERVIEW
It is often the nature of our students, particularly the older ones, to be absent from time to time. One of Springboard's strengths is our engagement with learners whose attendance at school has been very low or even zero for some time. Consequently, attendance figures need to be viewed on an individual basis, usually showing great improvement over time.

BACKGROUND
At the heart of good attendance is the value and importance that parents, carers and students put on what the school has to offer.

School must be seen as a centre that helps develop individual intelligence, skills and talents so that students can face the future with confidence.

School must be a community that teaches the skills needed for students to develop into co-operative and useful members of the society of which they are part.

It must ensure that students feel secure, supported and stimulated. Schools should provide students with a sense of wonder, fascination and enthusiasm to want to continue to learn.

In order to achieve and make the most out of their time at school good attendance is crucial. If students are not attending, they cannot learn; if students are not present, they cannot be helped.

All efforts must be made to ensure their best possible attendance.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Ensuring the best attendance possible is a partnership involving many people, who play different roles in helping the students make the best use of their time at school:

Parent / Carers: need to support the general attendance of their child and keep the school well informed as possible about any reasons for absence. For children under the age of 16, their parent/guardian/carer have the legal obligation of ensuring their child attends school under law.

Class Teacher: encourage and stress good attendance and punctuality, accurate register information, follow up notes / liaise with families, discuss targets, keep records, display information and raise attendance awareness.

Senior Leadership: will oversee the whole school policy – report to Directors / liaise with external agencies, work with management team and Directors in setting targets for improvement. Monitor registers and administration procedures, weekly registers, unauthorised absentees - sign in/ out book/ attendance data for DfES and school on the school system.

Both the HMI and the Elton Report (1989) emphasise the responsibility of the Directors to ensure that attendance registers are properly kept and that regular returns of attendance figures are made to the DfES.

Attendance data is reported to SLT termly.

AIMS
1. To create a positive environment in which attendance is valued, praised and rewarded.
2. To expect good attendance.
3. To monitor and evaluate individual attendance patterns.
4. To be aware of and sensitive to individual needs and respond to them.
5. To facilitate the recording and reporting to the LA and the DfE.

STATEMENT OF VALUES

The curriculum and other opportunities available at Springboard are only accessible if the student attends on a regular basis.

It is vital that the school works in partnership with parents, carers, guardians and the student in order to ensure a positive environment that aims to encourage attendance and an active involvement in the educative process. Confidentiality is always respected, unless the safety of the student is compromised.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

The following points should be considered:

- Attendance is a joint school/ parent responsibility. The school will always attempt to make contact with home on the first day of un-notified absence and will take appropriate action if this is unsuccessful.

- Non-attendance is possible avoidance strategy. Avoidance could be due to
    1. bullying
    2. consequences of actions
    3. sanctions
    4. certain lessons
    5. 'unusual events'

- Non-attendance is possibly habitual.

- Non-attendance is possibly disaffection.

- Non-attendance is possibly a condoned outcome.

- Non-attendance is possibly a sign of neglect.

- The school monitors non-attendance across the age range against a number of criteria.

ATTENDANCE ASSESSMENT

- Identify trends in non-attendance.

- Identify reasons for absence, poor behaviour and lack of progress.

- A note of explanation from the parent must follow non-attendance (or an unjustified mark). If the attendance pattern causes concern, then the following procedures should be engaged.

PROCEDURES FOR PERSISTENT NON-ATTENDANCE

1. Contact made to home by School Admin/Safeguarding Team to ascertain reasons for non-attendance.

2. Management to hold weekly behaviour and attendance meetings to identify students and families who need extra support to improve attendance.

3. The Safeguarding team must be made aware about the lack of attendance and must support the Headteacher in improving schools' attendance.

4. Head Teacher to ascertain reasons for absence if persistent.

    4.1 A letter will be sent home to remind parent/guarding/carer of attendance percentage going down.

    4.2 Meeting together with parents, carers and staff to discuss strategies to improve attendance and when appropriate students should be included.

4.3 Student will be put into an attendance improvement plan, where attendance will be monitored for a period of 10 weeks, any absences without a doctor note will be classed as unauthorised. LEA will be informed of this step.

4.4 The safeguarding team will begin to make referrals if attendance does not improve

4.5 In extreme cases the LEA will issue fines for non-attendance.

5. Legal implications can be negative therefore it is preferable to foster positive home / school links to find areas of interest to motivate the student into a positive attitude towards the school curriculum.

6. Individual programmes or re-integration of long term absentees.

7. Parents may have difficulties in assisting improved attendance e.g. transport problems. All necessary help should be offered to gain a more positive attendance record.

8. If non-attendance (Springboard has an expectation of a minimum of 85% attendance) remains persistent the local authority needs to be made aware of the situation.

9. Regular lateness will also be followed up.

10. Home Visit by staff to assess the situation, discuss any problems and help come to a positive solution.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE
Generally, the school aims to make the environment as welcoming as possible. Students are encouraged to make use of leisure and play facilities are provided during breaks. Staff promote positive interactions with the student at all appropriate opportunities. Parents and Carers are informed on a regular basis of their child's achievements.

Examples of Strategies for Improving Attendance
HMI are in favour of positive strategies that encourage students to attend, and support the following:
➤ Scrupulous maintenance of registers, careful monitoring of the attendance of individual students and swift and effective following action;

➤ Raising the profile of attendance by setting targets, involving classes and students;

➤ Entering improvements on the school record of a poor attender;

➤ Devising flexible and innovative responses to those who find it difficult to attend regularly for whatever reason;

➤ Welcoming students back after illness, and taking specific measures to ease students back into school after protracted absence;

- Teachers to prepare work to be sent home to encourage and support students to come back to school:

- Briefing teachers on how to organise the work of a class to allow for returning absentees without loss of momentum for the class as a whole;

REGISTRATION

The system for marking registers is as follows:

The register may only be completed by a member of staff and this should be done using **Class Charts** system, under, **Attendance tab. If the system is not available a paper register will be used.**

Symbols to denote reason for absence should be used according to this chart.

Register Codes

/	Present AM	Authorised	
****	Present PM	Authorised	
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Authorised	
-	All should attend/No Mark Recorded		Incomplete Register
A	Exceptional Circumstances	Authorised	Social Emotional and Mental Health
B	Educated Offsite	Authorised	Outreach Programme
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised	Leave of absence granted by school. E.G: Funeral, temporary part time timetable, pupil is pregnant.
D	Dual Registration	Authorised	
E	Excluded	Authorised	
F	Excluded Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised	
G	Unauthorised Holiday	Unauthorised	
H	Annual Family Holiday (Agreed)	Authorised	
I	Illness - Not medical or dental appointment	Authorised	
J	Interview with prospective employers.	Authorised	
L	Late	Authorised	Complete minutes late
M	Medical or Dental Appointment	Authorised	
N	No Reason Yet Provided for Absence	Unauthorised	Follow non attendance by 9:30 procedure. (Admin staff to be informed)
O	Unauthorised Absence	Unauthorised	
P	Participation in supervised sporting activity	Authorised	

R	Religious Observance	Authorised	
S	Study Leave	Authorised	
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised	
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised	After 9:30 arrival without unexplained reason. (SLT discussion, this goes case by case)
V	Educational Visit or Trip	Authorised	
W	Work Experience	Authorised	
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school	Authorised	
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Authorised	This code also should be used when school is closed because E:G snow days.
Z	Student Not on Roll	Authorised	

If a student arrives late after registration has closed at 9.30 a.m. or at 1.30 p.m. Staff should inform management team, giving date, time, and reason.

DEFINITIONS

Authorised absence: students are deemed to have authorised absence if we are given knowledge of illness or a prior reason for absence which is within the definition for authorised absence in the latest Government Circular on the subject. **Staff MUST not assume authorised absence until agreed with Senior Management Team, until then staff should assume the absence is unauthorised.**

Unauthorised absence: The law requires absences not agreed in advance to be unauthorised unless and until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming. Students are deemed to have unauthorised absence if we know that the child is truanting - i.e. the parent assumes that the child is in school, or if we are given an unacceptable reason for a child's absence.

PROCEDURES
Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions in the **Class Charts** system. **If the system is not available a paper register will be used.**

The register is closed at 9.30 and those who arrive later are marked late and a reason is asked for, unless we have prior notice of the lateness - e.g., Dental or doctors' appointment etc.

Parents and carers are requested to let us know as soon as possible by note, phone call or verbal message.

From time-to-time letters are sent to all parents reminding them of the importance of regular attendance.

If the child does not arrive at school and staff have been unable to reach out to parents and/or taxi company within a 30 minutes window, school will either do home welfare check or contact the police to make a welfare check.