



SPRINGFIELDS FIRST SCHOOL
Yarnfield, Stone, Staffordshire, ST15 0NJ
'ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER'

28/06/2024

Dear parents/carers,

At Springfields First School, we firmly believe that regular school attendance is essential for the educational progress and overall wellbeing of our pupils.

There have been changes to the law introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 regarding unauthorised leave. These will come into effect from 19 August 2024 and any unauthorised leave taken after this date will be dealt with under the new regulations.

The changes to the regulations are significant so please ensure you understand them and the impact on you before taking leave in term time. If you book a holiday now to take place after the start of the school term in September 2024, the new law will still apply as it is when the unauthorised leave takes place, not the notification of it that is affected.

Why regular attendance matters

Consistent school attendance allows your child to:

- Fully engage in learning and make academic progress
- Develop critical social skills by interacting with their friends and teachers
- Grow in confidence in a supportive and nurturing school environment
- Build a sense of routine and responsibility, essential for future success

Attendance support

We understand that some pupils may face challenges that impact their attendance. Our school is here to provide support and guidance to pupils and families in such situations. If you encounter any difficulties related to attendance, please do reach out to Mrs Bagnall, Mrs Goodfellow, Miss Stevenson or Mrs Hawkins.

Acceptable reasons for absence

We recognise that there are circumstances where a pupil's absence can't be avoided.

Acceptable reasons for being absent from school include:

- Illness:** when your child is unwell, either physically or mentally, and unable to attend school
- Medical appointments:** if your child has a medical appointment that cannot be scheduled outside school hours, please notify us in advance
- Religious observance:** we respect the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of our pupils. If your child needs to be absent for religious observance, please submit a request and Mrs Bagnall will review it.

Alison Bagnall
Headteacher



Telephone: 01785 337310
admin@springfields-first.staffs.sch.uk

Exceptional circumstances: in exceptional situations, such as family emergencies or unforeseen events, please contact the school immediately to discuss the absence

How to report unplanned absences

In the event of an unplanned absence, we ask that you follow these steps:

- 1. Contact the school:** on the day of the absence, please call the school office On 01785 337310 before 8.45am to inform us about your child's absence
- 2. Provide a reason for absence:** please provide a brief explanation for the absence, such as illness or family emergency, to help us maintain accurate records
- 3. School will contact parents:** we will contact parents/carers by text and phone if no explanation is given for an unplanned absence

Term-time holidays

Term-time holidays are generally not permitted during the school year. Absences due to term-time holidays are disruptive to learning and lead to missed opportunities in the classroom.

However, we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances that require a term-time holiday. In such rare cases, please submit a formal request to the headteacher well in advance. The headteacher will carefully consider each request and, if deemed appropriate and in the best interest of the child, may grant permission for the term-time holiday.

We emphasise that such instances will only be considered on a discretionary basis, and the decision will be made with the pupil's educational welfare as the utmost priority. We appreciate your co-operation and understanding regarding our approach to term-time holidays.

You may have heard about the new national threshold for issuing penalty notices which has been set at 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

However, if in an individual case the local authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.

For example - where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events.

Schools are required to notify the local authority of all unauthorised leave in term time that meets the threshold of 5 school days, and any below this threshold that falls within our discretionary powers to issue one.

Sanctions for unauthorised absence

From the beginning of the autumn term 2024, the headteacher may issue a fine (known as a fixed-penalty notice) for unauthorised absence. If issued with one, you'll need to pay this directly to the local authority – £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

The decision whether to issue a fine will take into account whether the national threshold has been met – namely 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks – as well as other factors.

Before a fine is issued, you may receive a notice to improve to give you a chance to engage with support.

If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the county council will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If you are found guilty, the potential fine is up to £1000.

The three-year rolling period for each parent starts when the first penalty notice is issued to you after the start of the school term in September 2024.



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Rewards for good attendance

We value and recognise good attendance at Springfields First School. Pupils who maintain excellent attendance records throughout the academic year receive certificates for 100% attendance. Each month we celebrate the class with the best attendance with a whole class certificate.

My question hasn't been answered here

Please get in touch with Mrs Hawkins by phoning the school office on 01785 337310 with any further questions, and we'll be happy to discuss them with you.

Thank you for your co-operation in making sure your child receives the best possible educational experience.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Bagnall

Headteacher

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