

Spa Camberwell Attendance Policy 2023-2024



At Spa Camberwell we :

- promote good attendance and reduce any patterns of absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education they are entitled to
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

We support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

All pupils at Spa Camberwell have autism and an Education, Health and Care Plan. We always consider the needs of each individual pupil and their family when recording attendance and punctuality. We work closely with each pupil and their family to offer support and practical strategies to help.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Working Together to Improve Attendance \(England\) Guidance 2022](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register is taken at the start of the school day. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Secondary pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day. Primary pupils must arrive by 9.30am on each school day.

The register for secondary classes will be taken at 9:15 and the register for primary will be taken at 9.35 and kept open until 9.45.

Secondary pupils travelling independently or with family may be marked as late if they arrive after 9:15. We also consider the individual needs of our pupils and their families.

We know transitions and routines, including journeys and travelling, can cause anxiety for many of our pupils. This is considered when recording punctuality and attendance data.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents should call the school on 020 3434 5210 or e mail the school office:

officecamberwell@spa-education.org

Parents should not rely on home-to-school transport staff to pass on messages about absence or lateness.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Families should let the office know in advance. We do encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours wherever possible. We know many of our pupils need to access specialist services and absences related to these appointments are always approved.

Please inform the school in advance either by phoning, emailing or putting a note in your child's home-school diary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

Lateness due to issues with home-to-transport will be addressed directly with *Southwark Transport* and parents will be informed so that they are aware.

Secondary pupils travelling with family may be marked as late if they arrive after 9:15. Primary pupils travelling with family may be marked as late if they arrive after 9:45.

In the rare case when a family needs to make alternative arrangements to the start or collection time for their child, these will need to be discussed with the Head or Deputy Headteacher in the first instance. We recognise how important the beginning and end of day are for all pupils and strongly encourage all families to keep to the timings of the school day.

3.5 Following up absence

If a pupil is absent we will call you to check in with you, find out the reason for the absence and check if you need any support, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary and agree how to record the absence in our register. Families should not rely on home-to-school transport to inform the school of absence. We will call you regardless of whether a message from transport has been received or not.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance information will be reported to parents as part of the pupil's Summer Report as well as the EHC Annual Review.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Authorisation from the Headteacher, in writing, should be sought if a term time absence is to be requested due to the family taking a holiday or travelling overseas for any reason. This request should be made as far in advance as possible with an explanation as to why the trip cannot occur out of term time.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school and none of the above requirements have been met

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. We aim to avoid this ever being necessary by working closely with you, your child and other services who offer support.

After 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Spa Camberwell will work with families to ensure all pupils have excellent attendance and punctuality. We will work with families to identify any barriers and will work collaboratively to support the young person and their families.

If you have concerns, in the first instance please speak with either the Family Support Administrator or any member of the Senior Management Team.

We will work closely with families to identify pupils at risk of refusing to come to school and to implement strategies that support the young person and the family. We may make referrals to external agencies such as Family Early Help, CAMHS, All Age Disability Team or Southwark or other Local Authority Transport services in consultation with families. An attendance action plan will be written in collaboration with the family as a supportive measure.

6. Attendance monitoring

Our administrator for family links, monitors pupil absence daily.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents should call each day that the child is ill to maintain regular contact with the school

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will discuss referring to the Family early help Team with you.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10% we first establish if there are genuine reasons for this and to make a plan with you to increase attendance. Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Attendance and punctuality data is reviewed by the Deputy Headteacher and administrator for family links. An attendance action plan will then be developed for those pupils identified as needing to improve attendance and punctuality. This involves, in the first instance, a meeting with the family to ascertain barriers to attendance and possible solutions that can be implemented.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The local governing body

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The head of school

The head of school is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The head of school also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer - administrator for family links.

The attendance officer:

- Recording attendance daily, using the correct codes
- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for reporting absence to the office each day.

recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the local governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day