



Springcroft Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Author/owner: Springcroft Primary School
Anticipated Review: Autumn Term 2028

Approved	Signature	Date

Our Mission Statement:
The place to learn, the place to succeed, the place to make friends,
the place to grow.

Your child's Individual School Attendance Target is at least 95% - but the higher the better!

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders settle into Secondary school more easily.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, that have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

**Throughout this policy any reference to 'parent/s' refers to... all natural parents, whether they are married or not, any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person and any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child.)*

Accessibility of this School Attendance Policy?

This attendance policy is available on our school website. A hard copy is also available to parents within school. The policy may also be emailed to parents if requested.

The Local Authority will be provided with a copy of our Attendance Policy if required in relation to their statutory legal role for school attendance.

This policy will be reviewed and updated regularly. The views of pupils and parents will be included in this process.

Principles:

We strive to achieve an effective whole school culture of high attendance and punctuality which is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities.

For children on the school roll, regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise their educational opportunities and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Promoting excellent attendance is everyone's responsibility in school. We aim for positive outcomes for all our pupils.

This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other statutory policies including safeguarding, parental responsibility measures, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision, children missing education and supporting pupils with medical conditions at school.

School Responsibilities:

- We will set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all our pupils. Good school attendance is integral to a child's attainment, wellbeing and wider development.
- We will share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Where attendance or punctuality is a concern then we will work with parents to supportively address any barriers to regular attendance and / or punctuality by arranging a meeting. A personalised program of support will be put in place to address any issues in order that barriers are overcome. This support will be documented. We can offer emotional coaching through our Hope training as well as advice and voluntary referral to other supportive agencies such as: Early Help for families from the Local Authority, the School Nurse, Child and Mental Health Service and other Children's services.
- We will regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- We will follow up unexplained absences by phone calls, messages via Arbor and where necessary home visits. (see section on First Day Contact below)
- We will remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in our school updates as well as during our meet the teacher sessions.
- We will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable absence to build the pupil's confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- We will publish our attendance rate in the school profile each year.
- We will acknowledge good and improved attendance and punctuality and this information will be provided on your child's school report.
- If we continue to have concerns over your child's attendance or punctuality we may make a referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Worker. These officers may visit you at home to investigate the reasons for your child's poor attendance.
- We will provide regular attendance training to our staff as part of professional development.

Parents Responsibilities:

- Ensure your child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Absence should only happen if your child is significantly ill and therefore unfit to attend school, or if there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty/period of difficulty.
- Notify school by 9:00am through Arbor of your child's absence, giving a reason for the absence as well as a timescale for their likely return. After a three-day absence parents should contact the school again with an update via Arbor. If there is no contact from a child's parent, this will be marked as unauthorised. This is part of our safeguarding procedures, see below for more details.
- Where possible arrange all non-emergency medical / dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- Make sure that you provide school with a minimum of 2, up to date, emergency contact numbers for your child.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect your child's attendance
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.

- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.
- Do not book holidays in term time – these will not be authorised except for exceptional circumstances.
- If a parent or a pupil needs to speak to a member of staff regarding attendance, this would be their class teacher in the first instance. (Contact via phone or our class email address) If more detailed support regarding attendance is required, please contact the Headteacher.

First day contact systems - Safeguarding

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ensuring your child attends school regularly. Absence should only happen when your child is significantly ill and therefore unfit to attend school, or if there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty/period of difficulty.
- Parent/carers must notify our school that a child is absent, providing the school with a reason for the absence. This should be done on day one of an absence by Arbor.
- If a child is ill or has an appointment then it is the responsibility of the child's parent to inform the school by 9:15am. This can be done through the parent mail app. After a three-day absence parents should contact the school again with an update via Arbor. If there is no contact from a child's parent, this will be marked as unauthorised.
- Where the school does not receive information about child's absence from a parent, the school will contact parents by 9:30 to ascertain the reasons for absence. If there is no response within 15 minutes then a phone call will be made directly to the parent / guardian and other emergency contacts. If there is still no response then the school safeguarding lead will be informed who may visit the home or contact Staffordshire Children's Support and Advice Service. Please be aware that if we are unable to establish the reason for your child's absence from school, this is considered a safeguarding matter relating to your child which we, as a school, have to act upon.
- If we fail to receive a response (and the absence remains unexplained) and your child has a social worker, we will inform the social worker of the concern.
- If your child does not have a social worker but we are concerned that we have not heard from the parent, then further welfare procedures may occur, such as a homevisit, a referral to Staffordshire Children's Support and Advice Service, (social services) or a referral to the Police.
- Any unexplained absences will be marked as unauthorised absence. It is unauthorised absences that are the evidence for a Penalty Notice or prosecution for irregular attendance.

Punctuality

It is important to be on time as the first part of the school day as learning begins at 9:00am. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.

School starts at **9.00am** and finishes at **3.30pm**

Morning Registration starts at	9.00am	Your child is late if they are not in school by 9am and will receive an L mark up to 9.05am	L code
Morning registers close at	9.15am	Your child is Late After Registers Close – U Code) if they arrive at 9.16am or later.	U code
Afternoon Registration starts at	1.00pm (EYFS & KS1) 1.15pm (KS2)	Following the lunch break your child is late if they are not in school by 1pm up to 1:05pm	L code
Afternoon registers close at	1.05pm (EYFS & KS1) 1.20pm (KS2)	Your child is Late After Registration Closes – U Code) if they arrive after this time.	U code

If your child is persistently late you will be informed of the concern initially via letter. The option of speaking with the school about any barriers to punctuality and any support required will be offered. If your child receives 5 late codes in a half term then we will write to parents to inform you of our concerns over your child's late arrival. If it continues we will send another letter before setting up a meeting to discuss the situation with you and to find solutions to support you.

All lateness is recorded daily. The time of arrival and the reason for lateness, if known, will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts and to the Local Authority in the form of a report, should a Penalty Notice or prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness after the registers have closed.

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school may be required to share these concerns with other agencies.

Supporting and encouraging your child's school attendance.

All children can sometimes be reluctant to attend school; however it is never good to cover up their absence or to give in to the pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent.

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems.

What is good attendance and how will parents and pupils be aware of this?

We would like all of our pupils to achieve the 'green' category of attendance, where possible. Our aim for this high level of attendance links the importance of attendance with children's potential learning and attainment.

100% attendance	0 days absent	Outstanding Attendance	Gives a child the very best chance of success.
95% attendance	9.5 days absent	Satisfactory Attendance	Few interruptions to learning – a good chance for success.
93% attendance	13.3 days absent	Worrying attendance.	Your child has missed almost 3 weeks of learning (around 67 hours of learning).
90% attendance or less.	19 days absent (or more)	Serious concern. Persistent Absentee	This is equivalent to one day absence every fortnight (almost 4 weeks off school.) (Around 95 hours or more of learning missed).
80% attendance or less	38 days absent (or more)	Serious concern. Persistent Absentee.	This is almost 8 weeks of school missed (around 190 hours or more of learning missed.)
70% attendance or less	57 days	Serious concern. Persistent Absentee	This is more than 11 weeks of school missed (around 285 hours or more of learning missed.)
60% attendance or less	76 days	Serious concern. Persistent Absentee	This is more than 15 weeks of school missed (around 190 hours or more of learning missed.)
50% attendance or less.	95 days absent (or more)	<u>Very</u> serious concern. Persistent Absentee	This is 19 weeks or more of school missed (around 475 hours or more of learning missed.)
<i>The above number of days & hours of learning missed relate to your child's percentage attendance over a whole academic year. This is just a guide.</i> <i>Note all cases of school attendance are personal and will be considered on an individual basis to consider the individual needs of the pupil & family.</i>			

Parents will be informed of their child's school attendance on a regular basis via Parents evenings and in your child's annual report. At each parents evening we will provide you with your child's individual attendance percentage. We will also raise any attendance concerns via letters to parents. If parents have any queries regarding their child's attendance, or request support, then please contact the child's form teacher to discuss this further.

Exceptional Leave- requesting a Holiday or leave of absence during term time.

We are always concerned if a pupil misses school as a result of term time leave. There is no entitlement to time off during term time. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Head teacher, in accordance with the DFE guidance. It is our policy:

- Only in an exceptional circumstance will term time leave be allowed. Each request is considered individually.
- Alongside your request of leave for 'exceptional' circumstances it is parents/carers responsibility to provide all the necessary information and proof of the exceptional

circumstance in order to make an informed decision. Without the necessary proof and documentation to support the request for exceptional circumstances absence, the request will be automatically refused. The form is available on the school website.

- Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form well in advance (with a minimum of 2 weeks' notice unless there is a family emergency) and before booking tickets or making travel arrangements. The Headteacher will advise you of their decision to authorise or unauthorise the absence in writing - this may require you to attend a meeting to discuss this.
- Please note the cheaper cost of holidays in term time is not an acceptable reason for an application.
- Please be aware that a Headteacher should not authorise leave of absence after the event, if a parent failed to inform the school. If school become suspicious over an absence, then further investigations may occur to ensure the safeguarding of your child.
- If your request for leave is granted under exceptional circumstances but your child does not return to school at the time he/she/they is expected (i.e. the date following the leave of absence) and no information is available to explain or justify the continued absence, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Please remember that absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/her/they learning. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and you may be liable for a penalty notice fine (issued by the Local Authority.) (See below details). If you choose not to pay the fine you may face prosecution if the absence meets the criteria set out in the Local Authorities Code of Conduct.

You have the right to make representations to the Chair of Governors if you feel the Head teacher's decision is unjust, however the final decision lies with the Head teacher regarding the decision to authorise and the Local Authority regarding the Penalty Notice process.

Medical / Dental / Illness Absences

Where possible the school encourages medical appointments to be taken out of school hours. If a medical appointment has to occur during school time, we request that the minimal amount of time out of school is taken and where possible the child should register in school.

If your child is unfit for school for medical reasons that are re-occurring, we recommend that a parent/carer seeks advice from their doctor about how long to keep your child off school.

If your child has a high level of absence due to illness, school may request that a parent/carer supports the absence with medical confirmation. This may be required to enable the school to continue to authorise the absences. This can be in the form of an appointment card or a label on prescribed medication. Alternatively the medical professional may be able to advise school of how well your child is able to attend school. This information would help school with any potential care plan that may be required for when your child is in school. In addition to

this a school must ensure that a child who is unable to attend school due to long term medical reasons, continues to have the offer of education provision. Again medical confirmation is required for a school to arrange this.

Safeguarding procedures relating to school attendance.

Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Local Authority Safeguarding team / Education Welfare Worker.

Our first day contact procedures ensure that by contacting parents to establish the reason for your child's absence, parents are made aware that the child is absent from school and school can confirm with the parent that the child is safe.

If we as a school do not receive communication from a parent regarding their child's absence, and if we as a school are unsuccessful in contacting the parent, we will consider this to be a safeguarding concern. This is why our system of requesting parents contact our school on each day of absence, prior to 9:15am is of the paramount importance.

Our school will also encourage parents to provide a minimum of two emergency contact details for their child, to the school.

The school may also involve the Local Authority Safeguarding Team/ Local Support Team when absences are irregular or if there are punctuality issues of concern.

If your child has a social worker, our school will also inform the social worker direct if your child has any unexplained absences from school

Promotion of School Attendance

School attendance is integral to learning and achieving. We promote attendance and punctuality throughout the school through school assemblies, letters to parents/carers, newsletter attendance information and attendance rewards.

Regular data analysis ensures that we act upon any incidents of absence concerns at the time of occurrence, so the promotion of school attendance is timely and personalised.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE AND SEVERE ABSENCE

Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. This is defined by the Department for Education. Absence at this level (90% or below) is a concern in the effect upon a child's education and we need parents full support and co-operation to tackle this. 10% absence is equivalent to 1 day or more (of absence) per fortnight across a full school year, (this is around 95 hours or more of missed learning.)

Severe Absence

Is defined by the Department of Education as those missing 50% or more of their education. (This is around 475 hours or more of missed learning.) School will work closely with families in this situation as a priority for intensive support. If support to resolve the absences is not accessed and the absences continue, this is considered to be neglect.

What is the school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence?

School attendance is monitored on a weekly, half termly and termly basis in order to address any attendance matters. We aim to reduce our persistent and severe absence by working

closely with parents and pupils by ascertaining with parents what the attendance barriers are, what support we can put in place. This is recorded on a child's welfare record. If there are any barriers to school attendance we will consider how we can support families to overcome these. Other support agencies can also be offered. Within school we consider whole school strategies to enhance school attendance as well as individual work with families.

How does the school access wider support services to support in removing the barriers to attendance?

We will ensure we remain up to date with the support agencies available to us within our locality. We will ensure that families are made aware of these voluntary options, such as Early Help, School Nurse, CAMHS etc. and that we are clear within school how to refer.

When will the Local Authority become involved?

The Local Authority can support families via Early Help, which is a voluntary support option. If support is not being accessed and there is a continued concern, then the statutory options of a Penalty Notice or prosecution for irregular attendance will be considered. This is accessed by a referral from schools. See below details.

PENALTY NOTICES AND PROSECUTION FOR IRREGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Fixed Penalty Notices and /or prosecution for irregular school attendance will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for an unauthorised holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

The Local Authority Fixed Penalty Protocol will be used as a parental measure to improve pupil attendance in accordance with the Department of Education School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures Statutory Guidance January 2015.

Referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Worker

If school attendance difficulties cannot be improved, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker from the Local Authority. If attempts to improve the child's attendance has failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents, (under the Education Act 1996 s444 / s4441a,) or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and / or 3 months imprisonment.

Penalty Notices

In February 2024, the Department for Education published [Working together to improve School Attendance](#). Within this document, in Chapter 6, it lays out the changes to issuing penalty notices.

The changes to the law are introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and came into effect on 19 August 2024. This means that any unauthorised leave taken after this date will be dealt with under the new Regulations.

Two penalty notice limit in a three-year period

The three-year rolling period starts for parents when the first penalty notice is issued. The first Penalty Notices for leave in term time will increase to £160 per parent per child but can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

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 the parent is found guilty, the potential fine is up to £1000.

All penalty notices issued for any reason connected to unauthorised absences will be counted in the three-year period, even if they are not paid by the parents. The only penalty notices not counted in the three-year period will be those withdrawn by the county council due to an error related to them been issued.

National threshold for issuing penalty notices.

The new national threshold for issuing penalty notices 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.

It is important to understand that in the new regulations when Springcroft Primary School becomes aware that the threshold has been met, they are expected in every case to consider whether to request the county council issue a penalty notice. Therefore, county council will continue to ask Springcroft Primary School to notify them of all unauthorised leave in term time that meets the threshold of 5 school days, and any below this threshold that you want us to consider if it falls within our discretionary powers to issue one.

Schools follow the Staffordshire Local Authority code of conduct for the procedures of Penalty Notices. Details of this can be obtained from:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/Education-welfare/Attendance.aspx>

The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school attendance and take appropriate action for absences during term time, both to support Head teachers in their role and in challenging the small minority of parents that choose to disregard the law.

EQUALITY ACT 2010 / UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and high attendance expectations are set for all our pupils, this attendance policy does take into account that certain pupils and pupil cohorts will have specific needs. This policy will be applied fairly and consistently but we will always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:

Regular school attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

PUPIL'S MISSING EDUCATION / LEAVING SCHOOL

In the situation of our school being aware that a child is missing in education, we will follow the Missing in Education pupil guidance along with the Local Authority guidance. This will involve our school making reasonable enquiries for the whereabouts of the pupil within the first 10 days of absence, followed by the Local Authority making reasonable enquiries for the following 10 days. If the whereabouts of the child still cannot be ascertained, then the child

will be taken off the school roll, along with a referral to the Local Authority Children Missing in Education officer.

In order to avoid the above situation, we request that parents / carers inform school in writing if your child will be leaving. We will require information such as the date of moving, new address, new school, and new contact details.

TAKING A PUPIL OFF THE SCHOOL ROLL

Schools must inform their Local Authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register. These off-roll regulations are statutory. We will ensure that the Local Authority will be informed via the OR.1 form, following the Local Authority guidance.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

(Please see further guidance from the Local Authority for the full details of De-registration.)

School Registers are a legal document:

School registers are a legal document and we are required to take the attendance register twice a day. This is coded to show whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised Absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised Absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This can include for example: waiting for a delivery, going for a family day out, children who arrive at school after the registers have closed with no exceptional circumstances, going shopping or getting a haircut, because it is your child's birthday, term time holiday/cheap flights, parent's illness.

Where there is no explanation for an absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

Our Independent Attendance Consultant may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem. Unauthorised absence could result in a Penalty Notice Fine or other legal action.

Admission Register

This is a legal document with records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details, including those of their parents and of their previous school.

All schools must keep a record of attendance register entries and their admission register for at least 3 years and inform their Local Authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

Elective Home Education:

If we (the school) receive written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority Elective Home Education department of this decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register.

Whilst we will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will we seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Attendance data and targets:

The school will follow good practice of regularly reviewing attendance data and using this to inform practice within school for addressing attendance concerns. The following data will be utilised;

1. Daily / Weekly attendance data will be utilised such as lists of 'no reason yet provided', unauthorised absences, broken week reports, attendance levels of classes and whole school.
2. The school's historical attendance, persistent absence and severe absence figures will be compared with current data. School will use this to set their own attendance and persistent absence targets. The National and Local Authority data for school attendance and Persistent Absence will be utilised as a comparison as well as comparing to other similar schools locally. The targets set will be realistic but ambitious for whole school attendance and persistent absence.
3. Attendance data for vulnerable groups of pupils, ethnicity, gender, SEND, year group/class, disadvantaged pupils as well as code analysis will be analysed to consider what attendance strategies are required to address any cohorts with low attendance or any high levels of a particular attendance code. We will use this data to consider how we can improve attendance for particular cohorts by addressing any of the barriers that may be affecting this. It may be for example that girl's attendance is lower than boys, in which case we would investigate why this may be occurring and consider ways of supporting an improvement.

Our attendance figures are published publicly and our Ofsted report is also available for parents to view.

REPORTING TO GOVERNORS

Governors will receive a termly Head teacher's report on attendance and punctuality matters within school. This will include attendance and punctuality comparative data, information on school attendance and punctuality strategies currently undertaken within school, information on how the barriers to school attendance are being addressed, and the work with other agencies – including statutory school attendance work. The school Attendance Policy will also be reviewed with the school governors.

Useful Contacts and School Staff Responsible for Attendance Matters:

- School Attendance Officer: Toni Colclough

- Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to school attendance: Mr Drew
- Teacher in charge of attendance: Mrs Cunningham
- Staffordshire Children's Support and Advice Service: 0800 1313126
- School Link Governor: Miss J Wyman