

Spalding St Paul's Primary



Attendance Policy

Date of Policy	Review Date	Policy Written by:	Date Shared with Staff	Date Shared with Local School Board
November 2023	No later than two years following publication of the policy	Miss Donna Palmer (DSL & Inclusion Lead)	November 2023	November 2023

Attendance Policy

The responsibility for promoting attendance at Spalding St Paul's Primary School is shared by everyone involved in the school, pupils, parents, staff and Local School Board.

Our aim is to provide full and efficient education for all of our pupils. The school believes that all pupils benefit from education in school and therefore regular attendance is essential. The school will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child / children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities.

Article 28 - You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can

Our Aims

It is recognised that:

- It is the responsibility of parents / carers to ensure daily attendance at school as required by law.
- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

In order to achieve these aims the school will:

- Offer a safe and supportive environment, which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- Establish clear and effective procedures for administration.
- Foster a climate where the school community, teachers, parents/carers, Local School Board and pupils value attendance and punctuality.
- Comply with legal requirements.
- Ensure any child presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken.
- Have systems in place offering rewards and incentives for regular attendance and punctuality.
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance through established procedures.
- Support the Local School Board in taking an active role in promoting good attendance
- Work in partnerships with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service, Social Care and other outside agencies.

Expectations

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- Pupils attend school regularly and achieve 96%+ attendance over the academic year, to support future success.
- Pupils to attend school daily.
- Pupils arrive on time and are appropriately prepared for the school day.
- Pupils will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from parents:

- To avoid taking leave of absence during term time. Term time absences, especially during SATs and assessment periods, may seriously affect the progress of your child.
- Ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually between 08:40 and 08:50 through the main school gates.
- Ensure that they contact the school before 9.15am, whenever their child is unable to attend for **everyday** they are absent, unless agreed otherwise during the initial call.
- Ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework and have their bookbag (including their reading book and reading Record) and P.E kits etc.
- Leave of absence forms are to be requested and completed in advance. Please note leave of absence will only be granted under exceptional circumstances and is at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- Other planned absences/appointments must be notified before the absence is taken. Proof of appointments such as copies of appointment cards / letters will be requested.
- Parents may be invited to meetings to discuss attendance concerns (where necessary), and attend parents' consultation meetings to discuss progress or problems.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.
- Contact the child's teacher or the Inclusion Team, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school or their attendance.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- A telephone call from school will be made if the school has not received a reason for a child's absence. Home visits will be made if telephone contact is not successful. This is to ensure we are safeguarding our children.
- The school will comply with legal requirements for supporting and addressing attendance concerns, setting targets to be achieved.
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance through letters of concern or letters of attendance improvement.
- Attendance and punctuality will be monitored on a weekly basis, discussed with the Inclusion team if attendance concerns are arising.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will only share information on a need to know basis).
- Support for any student's mental health and emotional well-being.
- Ensure any child presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken.
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.

School organisation

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education. In addition, specific responsibilities are allocated to individual staff as follows:

Headteacher:

- Interview all parents who request leave of absence, unless specifically delegated to the Inclusion Team.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to Local School Board, pupils and parents.
- Set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.

Class Teacher:

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- Attendance is recorded am and pm on Integris, this is then checked by a member of the Inclusion Team. A present or absent mark should be filled in for every child on their register and not leave any blank spaces.
- To complete any **known reason** for an absence.
- If unsure which code to use, refer to Inclusion team.
- To refer any unexplained absence to the Inclusion Team to follow up.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
- To notify the Inclusion Team if a child does not return from lunch.

Inclusion Team:

- To report to the Headteacher on attendance issues.
- To liaise with the Attendance Team at the Local Authority.
- To analyse absence weekly and liaise with the Headteacher over actions to be taken.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To make sure all reasons for absence are recorded correctly in the register.
- Will request a reason for any absence from school
- To work with families and young people to improve individual's attendance.

Local School Board Members:

- Local School Board members may be given a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies.
- Local School Board members can play a valuable role through representation
- Request regular attendance progress reports for Local School Board members.

Office Staff:

- Telephone absence slips to be given to the Senior administrator.
- To record on CPOMS if a child is late to school or needs to leave school before end of school day.
- Log any messages that are on the voicemail from parents in the appropriate ways for recording absences (Integris).
- When children are late challenging lateness to support improvement.

Senior administrator to:

- Deal with all admissions processes.
- Complete the daily attendance.

- To input attendance data onto the Integris system using the correct codes as recommended by the DFE in their publication 'School Attendance'.
- To challenge parent / carer and report any suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
- To provide weekly / monthly / termly & annual reports for attendance for the Headteacher & Inclusion Lead.

Reasons why good attendance is important

- Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at school.
- Regular attendance encourages children to build friendships and develop their social skills, sharing ideas and working with their friends (linking to personal development of pupils).
- Non-attendees will miss out on essential learning and other social events (linking to personal development of pupils).
- The school has a proactive and positive ethos that places a high value on attendance and punctuality.

The School's Approach to Promoting Good Attendance

We recognise good attendance in school in the following ways:

- Recording of good attendance on individual End of Academic Year Reports.
- Classes who achieve 100% Attendance in a given week receive a special certificate given by the Headteacher.
- The class with the best attendance at the end of the week will receive the attendance bear and have a reward selected by the teacher
- Children with attendance over 96% will achieve an attendance badge and have a reward selected by the Inclusion Lead.
- Children with attendance over 96% at the of the year will get a certificate and a special reward selected by the Inclusion Lead.

At our school we link our attendance rewards with our work on Fundamental British Values and, most specifically, our work on **democracy**. The class with the highest attendance has to work together to select their reward by discussing ideas about what the reward could be, whether they should take the reward or whether they should "**bank it**" and then vote and reach a democratic decision about what they do. The reward ladder works like this:

1. **If you get the highest attendance you gain 10 minutes of reward time**
2. **If you beat the 96% target you get another 5 minutes added to the 10 minutes**
3. **If you achieve 100% then you get another 10 minutes added to the 15 minutes**

The children then decide what they do with their total reward. They can use it or bank it and they can bank up to 1 hour of reward time.

Managing Absence

Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session (9am and 1pm).
- Attendance checks in the morning daily, by the Inclusion Team, and at other appropriate times, such as the end of term analysis.
- First day calling for unexplained absence and Home Visits for any absence causing concern.
- An 'improved attendance' letter for any pupil showing improved attendance following Inclusion Team intervention.
- An Attendance Concern letter will be raised if attendance falls below 92% OR is on a consistent decline.
- Identifying and supporting pupils and parents who have attendance problems, including the sharing of relevant information with a destination school or other agencies.
- The Inclusion Team will arrange meetings with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school and work to resolve the issues.
- The Inclusion Team and the Headteacher will arrange School Attendance Panels for those children whose attendance is a cause for concern.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively.

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone or by a home visit from the Inclusion Team.
- Where there is no response or contact made, a home visit from the Inclusion Team will be arranged. If there is no response from the home visit the inclusion team may feel it is necessary to log this with Lincolnshire police on 111.
- If there are Child Protection or Safeguarding concerns other professionals involved with the family will be notified.
- Where non-attendance continues, the Inclusion Team will discuss with the Headteacher and further action plan will be required.
- If a pupil is missing for 10 days and we do not know where they are, we will report them to the Local Authority 'Missing from Education'.

Persistent Absence

In England, good attendance at school is 96.3%+ for the academic year. Lincolnshire County Council class **persistent absence** as 15% of a half term and then also of the academic year (28 days/ 56 sessions), including both authorised and unauthorised absences combined.

If a child's absence is a cause for concern and falls close to or below 85% in any half term, a meeting will initially be requested with the parent and then a School Attendance Panel will be called to ensure that the school and the family are actively working together to address the issue. An action plan will be drawn up and agreed by both parties and a timescale for improvement will be set. If attendance does not improve and attendance continues below 85%, further warning notices will be issued and further action will be taken, possibly resulting in court action being taken.

Strategies for persistent absentees

Attendance is monitored every week to explore patterns of absence. At the end of each term attendance is monitored and the following letters could be sent out to parents.

Escalation of Intervention If a pupil's attendance falls below **92% (GREEN STAGE)**

- The senior member of staff responsible for attendance will consider the reasons for lateness. Periods of proven/non-contested illness will be discounted within the percentage and then the following will happen:
- A letter will be sent home to the parents (Attendance Letter 1)

Escalation of Intervention If a pupil's attendance falls below **90% (AMBER STAGE)**

- The senior member of staff responsible for attendance will consider the reasons why attendance has not improved. Periods of proven/non-contested illness will be discounted within the percentage and then the following will happen:
- A letter will be sent home to the parents (Attendance Letter 2)
- Parents may be invited in to school to discuss their child's attendance with the senior member of staff responsible for attendance.

If a pupil's attendance falls below **85% (RED STAGE)**

- A letter will be sent home to the parents and they will be invited in to school to discuss their child's attendance with the senior member of staff responsible for attendance. (Attendance Panel). The Headteacher may be invited to this meeting.
- Parents will be invited in to school to ensure that they understand the significance of such poor attendance.
- An attendance action plan will be agreed with both the parent and pupil.
- Targets will be set to improve the attendance and the attendance will be monitored
- The possibility of a Penalty Notice will be discussed.
- Outside agencies may be involved – Social Services, Homestart etc.
- Should the school deem it necessary then the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.
- Further absences may only be authorised if evidence is provided.
- If attendance does not improve and attendance continues below 85%, further warning notices will be issued and further action will be taken, possibly resulting in court action being taken.

Medical Issues

Pupils with on-going long-term medical issues will also have their attendance monitored, but their absence for medical appointments will be considered. The school may request the support from the Children and Young Person's Nursing Team.

The school will require evidence from a child's doctor or medical specialist, along with copies of appointment letters etc. The school may request permission to contact these professionals for more information about a child's health and medical needs, in order that absence can be minimized. If there is a hospital appointment booked for a morning or afternoon we will expect you to attend school for the other sessions, *having a hospital appointment does not enable you to automatically have a whole day off school.*

If the school or the Nursing Team request that referrals are made to specialists, a timescale of actions will need to be agreed. Authorised absence for medical matters are normally granted for pupil illnesses. Medical appointments are to see: specialists, paediatricians, therapists (e.g Physiotherapists/Speech and Language) & hospital professionals.

Please note that this DOES NOT include optician and dental appointments under routine procedures and check-ups - these must be made out of normal school hours.

Absence during term time/ holiday requests

'Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.'

'Exceptional' in this context is being of unique and significant emotional or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another, and whilst it will be important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about any individual request, the normality will be that requests will be refused.

If Parents wish to make a holiday request then they must write a letter to the Headteacher, at least one month prior to the date of departure. A meeting will then be arranged, which you will need to attend. You will be informed of the final decision both verbally and in writing.

Only in exceptional circumstances, agreed by the Headteacher, will the absence be authorised. If the decision by the parents is to still intend to take their child/ren on holiday, a **Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letter/ notice** may be issued.

If a pupil is removed from school for an unauthorised holiday for more than 4.5 days, the School and the Local Authority will issue a **Fixed Penalty Notice**, under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, which carries a fine. Non-payment of this fine can result in prosecution on the grounds that the parent is failing to secure their child's school attendance.

Liaising with External Agencies

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people.

Other Agencies that can be used where appropriate in individual cases are:

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services (BOSS).
- Educational Psychologists/ CAMHS-Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Service.
- Social Care or the Early Help Team.
- Local Police or PSCO's.

Reintegration following absence or reduced timetable

The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence or reduced timetable requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfE Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance

- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the Pastoral Teaching Assistant or SENCO may be required.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on maintained schools and academies to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. Individual healthcare plans will normally

specify the type and level of support required to meet the medical needs of such pupils. Where children and young people also have SEN, their provision should be planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way with the healthcare plan. Schools are required to have regard to statutory guidance 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

Identifying children at risk of missing education

Children missing in education:

As outlined in 'Children Missing Education' (September 2016), a child at risk of missing education is defined as;

Children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a duty on all Local Authorities in England and Wales for them to make arrangements to identify children missing education in their area.

The duty applies to all children of compulsory school age, in any school, who are not on a school roll and are not receiving a suitable education. As part of its attendance strategy and duty, the Local Authority seek to identify all children who are missing education or at risk of missing education. As a school we must support this process.

Modified or Reduced timetable:

Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is subject to a modified/reduced timetable for more than one school term is at risk of missing education. The Local authority will identify children who meet these criteria based on the data we provide through the school census. If our school has children who meet the criteria, we will receive an email requesting information regarding the attendance of these children. The local authority will then track the attendance of these identified children through to the next census to monitor improvements.

Elective Home Education (EHE):

A parent must inform the school in writing if they wish to EHE their child. As soon as a school is informed in writing that a child is to be withdrawn to be electively home educated they need to phone 01522 782111 and liaise with the EHE Co-ordinator.

Schools are reminded that a child should not be assumed to be electively home educated until a letter has been received from the parents informing them of this decision. This letter must be sent to the Inclusion and Attendance team via EHE@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

There have been some recent cases of parents assuming that a tutor will be provided if they choose to electively home educate their children. Schools should ensure that parents/carers are fully aware of their responsibilities to home educate their child if they choose this route.