

Spalding Parish Church of England Day School

*We are a caring Christian Community built on
Compassion, Trust, Friendship and Hope.*

Attendance Policy



Date of Policy:

Revised March 2015

Adopted by Governing Body:

November 2012

Signed by Chairman of Governors:

Melvyn Price

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1. Mission Statement:

Spalding Parish Church of England Day School is committed to providing a full and effective education for all pupils. The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the School will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

2. Aims:

It is recognised that:

- 🏰 All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations;
- 🏰 No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development;
- 🏰 In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their Parents/Carers to ensure attendance at school as required by law;
- 🏰 Many pupils and their Parents/Carers may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities;
- 🏰 Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or Parents/Carers may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of Parents/Carers, 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.

3. Expectations:

Spalding Parish Church of England Day School has regular day-to-day contact with Parents/Carers, therefore, many Parents/Carers are easily contactable which helps to resolve problems and concerns quickly. Conversely, it may make it more difficult for teachers to question Parents/Carers about absences or to refer to other agencies when the Parent/Carer

is well known to the school. Good practice includes inviting Parents/Carers to meetings about attendance discreetly, perhaps by telephone call or letter and discussing with them the reasons why a referral is being made on to the Education Welfare Service or another agency and the expectation that this is to support and assist the family. If there are Child Protection concerns then the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedures will be followed immediately.

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- 🏰 That they attend school regularly;
- 🏰 That they arrive on time and are appropriately prepared for the day;
- 🏰 That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from Parents/Carers: (cf. Appendix 3)

- 🏰 To ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- 🏰 To ensure that they contact the school by 9.30am on each day of absence if their child is unable to attend;
- 🏰 To ensure a letter explaining the reason for absence is sent in with the child on their return to school;
- 🏰 To ensure that their child arrives in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework;
- 🏰 To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- 🏰 Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance;
- 🏰 Early contact with Parents/Carers when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason;
- 🏰 Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the pupil or their Parent/Carer);

- 🏰 Recognition and reward for good attendance;
- 🏰 A good quality education.

4. Encouraging Attendance through Good Practice and Rewards

Attendance is encouraged in the following ways:

- 🏰 Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 30 minutes of the start of the session;
- 🏰 Attendance checks at appropriate times;
- 🏰 Attendance Summary Sheets sent home to Parents/Carers every long term;
- 🏰 A sticker for 100% attendance for any one Term; a certificate for 100% attendance at the end of Terms 2, 4 and 6; a 'Gold' Award, for 100% attendance achieved throughout the year. (Attendance is 100% if there has been no absence);
- 🏰 Once weekly, class attendance figures for the previous week are given and displayed on classroom doors with the previous week's winner of attendance displayed in the Main Hall and on the School's website;
- 🏰 A trophy to be presented to the class with the best attendance each week;
- 🏰 All awards to be awarded by the Head Teacher, a member of the SLT, a school Governor or Education Welfare Officer, (EWO) as appropriate;
- 🏰 Establishing a mechanism for working with those Parents/Carers who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school;
- 🏰 Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of the transition between KS2 and KS3. This should include the sharing of relevant information with the destination school.

5. Responding to Non-Attendance:

When a pupil does not attend, SPCEDS needs to respond effectively:

- 🏠 If a note or telephone call is not received from Parents/Carers, they will be contacted on each day of absence by telephone or by letter if Parents/Carers are not on the telephone;
- 🏠 Where there is no response, a letter will be sent after three days of unexplained absence, or there may be a visit from a member of the school staff or the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) where the Service is already involved;
- 🏠 Where non-attendance continues, the case will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer for the school and further action planned; this may in appropriate cases, result in a referral to the EWS;
- 🏠 After 10 days of absence, unless other action is planned, the Parents/Carers will be invited to attend a meeting in school. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, EWO and Parents/Carers and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school;
- 🏠 If there is no improvement, then the case will be discussed again with the Education Welfare Officer with a view to a formal referral being made to the Education Welfare Service, if one has not already been made at an earlier stage. If a referral had already been made then the case will be reviewed and further action planned;
- 🏠 Following regular monitoring and identification of pupils with attendance concerns a process of concern letters will be sent to the Parent/Carer (Amber and Red letters);
- 🏠 Where little or no improvements are made, a School Attendance Panel meeting will be arranged with the Parent/Carer being invited to set targets for improvement.

Reintegration:

- 🏠 The return to SPCEDS for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfES Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance (Circular 10/99).
- 🏠 The Head Teacher is 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 Head Teacher 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 SENCo may be required.

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

Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentee via a conversation with the Head Teacher or an individual note in the register.

6. 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 there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher:

- 🏰 To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy;
- 🏰 To regularly report progress on attendance to pupils, Parents/Carers and Governors;
- 🏰 To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence;
- 🏰 To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data;
- 🏰 To oversee the work of administrative staff;
- 🏰 To produce the attendance profile for the whole school;
- 🏰 To liaise with the Education Welfare Officer.

Class Teacher:

-  To complete registers accurately and on time;
-  To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting Parents/Carers;
-  To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence;
-  To have information relating to attendance displayed in the classroom;
-  To record all reasons for absence in the register;
-  To inform the Head Teacher of concerns in a timely manner.

Office Staff:

SPCEDS administrative staff play a vital role in supporting SPCEDS' attendance and absence management strategies.

-  In the event of no message being received on each day of absence from the Parent/Carer, contact Parent/Carer by telephone. If no response, send a letter;
-  Monitor that absence letters are received and retained in the pupil's attendance file;
-  Produce updates from weekly registers, error sheets, absence code sheets, weekly % information;
-  Telephone absence notes to be put onto the Management Information System, G2, on the pupil's attendance notes;
-  Maintain a late book.

Governors:

-  Governors monitor attendance and the related policy;
-  Governors request regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

Parents/Carers:

- 🏠 Contact with SPCEDS on each day of absence by 9.30am;
- 🏠 Provide signed and dated absence notes explaining all absences on return to school;
- 🏠 Support their child and SPCEDS in achieving maximum attendance.

Education Welfare Service:

The Education Welfare Service has been described as the “attendance enforcement arm” of most local authorities (DES 1991) which complements the role of the school.

Lincolnshire Education Welfare Service will strive to provide a service that recognises the uniqueness of the school and the community it serves.

In accordance with the EWS Service Remit and Procedures they can support schools in a variety of ways:

- 🏠 They will liaise with identified school staff;
- 🏠 Where a referral is accepted, they will undertake home visits, either pre-arranged or without notice as considered necessary;
- 🏠 Through group work with identified groups of pupils;
- 🏠 Where necessary they will instigate legal proceedings on behalf of the LA including Parental prosecutions in the Magistrates’ Court and applying for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court;
- 🏠 They will accept referrals that meet the EWS referral criteria, initiate contact with Parents or Carers and undertake assessments;
- 🏠 They will plan and review casework;
- 🏠 They will provide feedback to schools;
- 🏠 They can offer strategic/policy advice and support in relation to matters of attendance, the employment of young people and young people involved in performing;

- 🏰 They will support schools in the establishment and management of School Attendance Panels;
- 🏰 They will support schools in the use of penalty notices and Parenting contracts within the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

7. Liaising with External Agencies

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

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 or the EWS. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people. The EWS may be able to help schools establish multi-agency meetings or may be able to advise on how schools can become involved in existing local arrangements.

Other Agencies to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- 🏰 Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- 🏰 Educational Psychologists.
- 🏰 Special Educational Needs Service.
- 🏰 Social Services.
- 🏰 Connexions.
- 🏰 Youth Service.
- 🏰 Local police.

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

Guidance for Class Teachers:

Suggested Methodology

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....

The Importance of Registration:

- 🏰 An attendance register, electronic or manual, must be kept on which, at the **beginning** of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. Registers should be collected from and returned to the School Office.
- 🏰 Electronic registers are used at SPCEDs. Hard copies, current for each session, must be kept to observe the spirit of the law and for Health and Safety reasons.
- 🏰 Accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures.

Categorising Absence:

- 🏰 **Only the school**, in the context of the law **can authorise absence**; a note or explanation from Parents/Carers does not guarantee authorisation. If a Class Teacher does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason then the matter must be referred to the Head Teacher.
- 🏰 Emerging patterns of absence should be reported to the Head Teacher.
- 🏰 Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.
- 🏰 Class Teachers who experience difficulty in receiving a Parental note should inform the Head Teacher.

Authorised or Unauthorised Absence:

Authorised absence is where SPCEDS has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised**.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

-  Illness;
-  Family bereavements;
-  Holiday (only in extenuating or exceptional circumstances);
-  Medical and dental appointments for the actual appointment and reasonable travel time only where proof of appointment is available;
-  Days of religious observance;
-  Fixed term exclusion;
-  Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

Family Holidays:

Parents/Carers should not take pupils on holiday during the school term. However, requests for extenuating and exceptional circumstances will be considered individually taking into account the age of the child, previous attendance patterns, parental views and the educational progress of the child. If a request is not granted and the Parent/Carer takes the child on holiday, the absence would not be authorised. If a request is granted the absence should not normally be for more than two weeks in any school year. If the holiday goes on for longer than agreed, the extra days absence should be unauthorised.

NB: Pupils who are absent from school but taking part in an approved educational activity should be marked in the usual way but are counted as present for the absence returns to the DfE. To avoid confusion in emergency situations pupils who are off site should not be marked as present. The following activities fall within this category:

-  Field trips and Educational Visits both in this country and overseas.

🏠 Sport Festivals, Dance/Music Exams, Transition Days

At SPCEDS absences will **not** be authorised under the following circumstances.

🏠 Shopping trips;

🏠 Holidays in Term time where the permission of SPCEDS has not been given before taking the holiday;

🏠 Minding the house or looking after siblings;

🏠 Lateness if registration is missed without explanation;

🏠 Medical appointments that cannot be verified;

🏠 No reason given;

🏠 Trips out of school for birthdays;

🏠 SPCEDS staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid.

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the Head Teacher to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered. Further advice is available in DfES Circular No. 10/99.

Lateness:

SPCEDS actively discourages late arrival by challenging young people who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation.

SPCEDS has a policy on how long registers remain open, (thirty minutes from the beginning of registration would be reasonable but this can be shorter). In the event of bad weather this period can be extended.

Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open they may be marked present.

Where a pupil arrives after register closure without good reason, they should be marked with an unauthorised absence using the code "U" on G2 to indicate that they are on site.

Removal from the School Roll

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in Circulars 1099 and 111/99 and the Schools Administration Handbook (section A2). **Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.**

-  Where SPCEDS has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
-  Where a pupil has ceased to attend SPCEDS and the Parents/Carers have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.
-  Where the school has been notified by the School Medical Officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school.
-  Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Head Teacher has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Education Welfare Service to obtain information on the cause of the absence;
-  Where the Head Teacher has been notified that the pupil has died.
-  The pupil has ceased to attend SPCEDS and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school.
-  If a pupil has not returned to SPCEDS within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time.
-  Where a pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and has been notified an intention to discontinue in attendance.
-  Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

Ensuring Pupil Information is up to date

SPCEDS will ensure, as far as is possible, that the information they hold on pupils and Parents/Carers is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date'.

Pupils who are missing

Where it is believed that a pupil has left the area and enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil, the Common Transfer File should be completed and uploaded to the DfES National Missing Pupils Database.

Good Practice:

Research suggests that good practice is associated with:

1. A senior teacher being charged with specific responsibility for pupil attendance;
2. A list of absentees being produced quickly, ideally by morning break, for use by appropriate teaching and office staff;
3. The school devising a sensitive scheme for the immediate follow-up of absentees - e.g. either by telephoning home or sending out letters to Parents/Carers;
4. Class Teachers ensuring that records of attendance are as accurate as possible and explanations for absence are produced when pupils return to school;
5. Phase Leaders monitoring the attendance records of classes within their phase;
6. Staff with responsibility for pupil attendance having regular meetings with EWO on an agreed basis;
7. Regular spot-checks for specific lesson truancy and for pupils leaving school before the end of the day, being enacted at intervals;
8. Rewards introduced for individual pupils or classes with an excellent attendance record in the form of praise or prizes;
9. Penalties being introduced for pupils who are persistently late;
10. Absentees and truants being quietly welcomed back to school upon their return and efforts made to reintegrate them socially and academically;
11. First day of absence contact. Where the school is able to resource this, a phone call to the homes of all, or a targeted group of absentees on their first day of absence has proved to be effective in addressing casual and opportunistic absence. Even short-term use of the strategy can produce long-term benefits;
12. Targeting identified pupils or groups of pupils with unsatisfactory levels of attendance, for example through school attendance panels, can have significant benefits;

Guidance Notes for Parents/Carers:

Suggestions for securing Parent/Carer involvement in ensuring regular attendance.

The Home-School Agreement at SPCEDS states the importance of regular and punctual attendance at school.

SPCEDS is committed to providing a quality education for all pupils. We believe that pupils can only benefit from the education in our school through regular school attendance. We will, therefore, strive to achieve the maximum possible attendance for all pupils and we will make sure that any problems are identified and resolved quickly. Wherever possible, we will make contact with Parents/Carers where a pupil is absent from school without good reason.

How Parents/Carers can help us:

-  Ensure that their child attends School regularly and that they arrive on time;
-  Contact the school whenever their child is absent, giving details of the reason for the absence and the length of time the child will be away;
-  Help their child prepare for the school day by ensuring that homework has been done and the child has everything he/she needs for the day ahead;
-  Attend Parents' Consultation Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect the child;
-  Contact the school if problems arise which may keep their child away from school, so that the school can help;
-  To avoid, wherever possible, taking family holidays in Term time other than for extenuating and exceptional circumstances. Term-time absences, especially during SATs and examination periods, may seriously affect the progress of your child;

Bibliography:

Education observed No. 13 - "Attendance at School"
HMI 1989 (Available free from the DfES)

School Attendance DfES - Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence (1994)

Education Welfare Service/Positive Behaviour Team - "A Whole School Approach to Attendance" training pack.
(Enquiries to Alison Hodgson, EWS, (10532-475603)

Enhancing Attendance - a teacher's guide to improving pupil attendance.
Editors - Malcolm MacDonald and Brian Daly
Northumberland County Council (1996).

Leeds Attendance Project Teachers - "Formulating an Attendance Policy" (1993/94)

Leeds Education Welfare Service - "Guidelines for Practice" (1991)

Dr D H Hargreaves - "Improving Secondary Schools" ILEA (1984)

The Elton Report - "Discipline in Schools" HMSO (1989)

Education of Travelling Children OFSTED Ref. HMR/12/96/NS (1996)

Travellers Information Handbook - Lincolnshire Traveller Education Service.

Absent from School - David Howe Bracken Press (1993)

Troubled and Vulnerable Children - A Practical Guide for Heads - Shelagh Webb, Croner Publications (1994) (cf. Chapter 4)

Tackling Truancy in Schools - A Practice Manual for Primary and Secondary Schools- Ken Reid - Routledge ISBN 0-415-20508-5 (recommended)

DfES Publications

Ensuring Regular Attendance at School (Guidance on the Legal Measures available to ensure Regular School Attendance) Ref:DfES/0432/2003

Social Inclusions Pupil Support Circulars 10/99, 11/99.

Is Your Child Missing Out? (School Attendance Information for Parents) Ref:PPY181
(Rev.2002)

Guidance on the Education-Related Parenting Contracts, Parenting Orders and Penalty Notices (Ref: DfES0234/2004)

Pupil Behaviour and Discipline 8/94

Education of Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties 9/94

Exclusions from School 10/94

DfES Home-School Agreements. Guidance for Schools.

Education by LEAs of Children otherwise than at school. 11/94

Education of Sick Children 12/94

Education of Children being looked after by Local Authorities 13/94

LEA Plans and Guidance

Lincolnshire Education Welfare Service - Fixed Penalty Notices
(Unauthorised Absences And Truancy) Code Of Conduct *to be read in association with :*

Guidance on The Use Of The Education Related Provisions Within The Anti- Social
Behaviour Act 2003

Schools Administration Handbook
Raising Standards Through the Improvement of School Attendance

Education Development Plan 2002 - 2007

Behaviour Support Plan

Performance and Budget Plan

Legislation

Education Act 1996

Data Protection Act 1998

Human Rights Act 1998