

# Spalding St Paul's Primary



## Attendance Policy

<b>Date of Policy</b>	<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Policy Written by:</b>	<b>Date Shared with Staff</b>	<b>Date Shared with Local School Board</b>
October 2021	No later than one year following publication of the policy	Miss Donna Palmer (Inclusion Lead)	October 2021	October 2021

## 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**

The school expects its pupils to:

- To attend regularly and on time.
- To be prepared adequately for the school day.
- To comply with the school policies and procedures.

The school expects its parents/carers:

- To encourage their children to attend school every day, on time.
- To contact the school on the first day of absence.
- To arrange holidays and medical appointments outside school hours.
- To regularly update emergency contact details.

It is the Parents'/Carers' responsibility to inform the school of a pupil's absence. Persistent failure to do so may be regarded as a safeguarding issue and advice sought from external agencies.

## **Registration**

We all have a responsibility to encourage good attendance and punctuality at school. It is important that every child arrives in school on time because:

- 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 uses an electronic (computerised) system of registration. The register is a legal document and as such can be used in a court of law (to establish a pupil's attendance or absence at a particular time on a precise day).

The registers are marked at the beginning of each session, morning and afternoon. Registers are marked in the first 10 minutes of the start of the school day. Registers are to be submitted by staff to the office by 9.00am.

School begins at 8:40am. Gate closes at 9:50am.

Pupils arriving after the start of the school day must enter the school via the main entrance at the front of the building where they will be met by the Admin Staff. They will record the pupil's name, time of arrival and reason for lateness. It is vital that any pupil arriving late is signed in, in order to comply with Health and Safety procedures. Pupils arriving after 9:00am will be marked with a late (L) mark.

The registers are closed at 9.30am. Any pupils arriving after this time will be regarded as absent for the full morning session even though they are present in school. This will be coded as an unauthorised absence (U) in the register unless other agreements have been made in a meeting with the Headteacher.

Registration will be taken again at the beginning of the afternoon session at 1:00pm. Should the child arrive after this time then they will be recorded as late (L).

## **Authorised Absence**

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Religious Observance in accordance with National/Local Authority guidelines.
- Medical or Dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours. Where possible parents/carers should try to arrange these appointments for out of school hours.
- Special circumstances (authorised by the Headteacher)
- Permanent or fixed term exclusions.

Since the 1st September 2013, the law has given no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from school.

## **Unauthorised Absences**

Absences may be recorded as unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Truancy – a pupil is away from school without authority from the Headteacher. This includes parentally condoned absences.
- Late after registration is closed (unless the pupil or parent provides a legitimate reason or evidence for the absence.)
- Any absence which the school has not been informed about, either by letter or telephone.
- Staying at home to look after a siblings or sick relatives.
- Going shopping, airport, time off for a birthday, meeting relatives or having hair cut etc.
- Any family holiday that has not been authorised by the Headteacher.

If Parents wish to make a holiday request then they must fill out a Leave of Absence Request Form from the school office at least one month prior to the date of departure. Only in exceptional circumstances, agreed by the Headteacher, will the absence be authorised. If the decision by the parents is to still take their child/ren on holiday then this absence will be recorded as Unauthorised.

## **Patterns of Absence**

First day of absence:

If a child is absent from school the parent/carer should phone the school office stating the child's name, class and reason for absence. Messages can be left on the school answer machine. If a parent/carer does not inform the school, Admin staff will ring the parental home on the first day of absence, send a text message or undertake a home visit to ascertain why the child is absent (this is for Safeguarding purposes).

## **Managing Absence:**

Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session (9am and 1pm) and within 30 minutes of the start of the session.
- 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.
- Recording of good attendance on individual End of Academic Year Reports.

- 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 90% OR is on a consistent decline.
- Classes who achieve 100% Attendance in a given week receive a special certificate given by the Headteacher.
- Identifying and supporting pupils 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's 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 (this is for Safeguarding purposes).
- Absences messages will be put in the registers and retained in the Inclusion office.
- 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 will 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 5 days and we do not know where they are, we will report them to the Local Authority 'Missing from Education'.
- If there is no improvement, then the case will be discussed again with the Inclusion Team and Lincolnshire Attendance team to seek appropriate action, this will involve the start of a single agency plan.

### **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.*

## **Strategies for persistent absentees**

### Escalation of Intervention

#### **If a pupil's attendance falls below 95% (GREEN STAGE)**

The Inclusion Team will consider the reasons for lateness. Periods of proven/non-contested illness will be discounted within the percentage and then the following will happen:

- The Inclusion Lead will call the Parents/Carers to discuss the issue and explain that the attendance level will be monitored for 4 weeks.

#### **Escalation of Intervention If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% (AMBER 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 Inclusion Lead. Should the school deem it necessary then the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

In the meeting:

- Targets will be set to improve the attendance and the attendance will be monitored over a two week period and then for a further 4-week period to ensure that it is maintained.
- An attendance action plan will be agreed with both the parent and pupil.

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

Parents will be invited in to school to ensure that they understand the significance of such poor attendance.

In this meeting:

- An action plan will be set up.
- A school attendance contract and support plan will be incorporated and the possibility of a Penalty Notice will be discussed.
- Outside agencies may be involved – Social Services, Homestart etc.
- Further absences may only be authorised if evidence is provided.