

SPALDING HIGH SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

HEADMISTRESS:	Mrs M K ANDERSON
LINK GOVERNOR:	Mr E FRAGALE Mr S WILLIAMS
SLT with responsibility for attendance:	Mrs L RAY Mrs T WALDRON
DATE AGREED:	February 2023
REVIEW FREQUENCY:	Biennial

Executive Summary:

This policy sets out the expectations of attendance and punctuality that apply to all students at Spalding High School to enable them to access and benefit from their full education. It also outlines the procedures undertaken for the recording and monitoring of attendance and the School's work with families to build trusting relationships and remove any barriers to attendance. Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility, teaching and non-teaching staff, the governing body, the local authority and other partners.

This policy reflects the statutory guidance:

'School attendance parental responsibility measures' for local authorities, school leaders, school staff and governing bodies and the police.' January 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance> & the non-statutory guidance

'Working together to improve school attendance' Guidance for schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities May 2022.

The School will consider obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN convention of the Rights of the Child.

Links to related policies:

Behaviour for Learning Policy

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Anti-bullying Policy

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy

Chairman of Governors

Date

Headmistress

Date

Section 1: Rationale

- 1.1 Spalding High School is committed to maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance. We will work with parents and carers as the best way of ensuring that attendance is as high as possible and that every student (including Sixth Form) has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- 1.2 The School has a legal duty to regularly monitor, analyse and identify students or cohorts that require support and to put effective strategies in place. Students should come to school every day. It is for the Headmistress to authorise absence, not the parent/carer.
- 1.3 Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school, parents whose children are of compulsory school age and registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. The School will follow up absence and poor punctuality through our effective and robust day to day processes. We will follow the ladder set out in 'Working together to improve school attendance' Guidance for schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities May 2022. (Appendix 1)
- 1.4 It is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances. There is a strong link between full attendance and excellent achievement. The students with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.
- 1.5 Regular attendance is extremely important in helping to safeguard our most vulnerable students and to provide the best opportunity for their needs to be identified and supported.
- 1.6 When the School identifies students who are at risk of persistent or severe absence (see categories below), we will work collaboratively with other schools, local authorities and partners to provide support and remove barriers to attendance.

Categories of attendance:

- 95% Good attendance
- 91% - 94% At risk of persistent absence
- <90% persistent absence
- 51% - 79% At risk of severe absence
- 50% Severe absence

Section 2: Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance

As a School we will:

- 2.1 Make attendance a central part of our ethos by ensuring we have a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all students want to be and are keen and ready to learn.
- 2.2 Explore all possible reasons for absence including underachievement, bullying, SEND, medical conditions, disabilities, safeguarding, well-being and disadvantaged students. Making use of appropriate resources and funding, including student premium funding.
- 2.3 Identify two members of the SLT with overall responsibility for attendance (Deputy HT and Assistant HT/Safeguarding Lead)
- 2.4 Ensure all staff are consistent in their approach towards attendance and receive the necessary training/professional development.

- 2.5 Set high expectations of attendance and punctuality.
- 2.6 Demonstrate the benefits of good attendance in our curriculum evenings, displays, assemblies and form periods.
- 2.7 Recognise children missing in education can act as a vital warning sign to a number of safeguarding concerns including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

Section 3: Regulations regarding absence

- 3.1 Students should only be absent if it is unavoidable. Allowing a student to be absent from school without good reason is against the law. The School, not parents, is required to classify every half-day absence as either *authorised* or *unauthorised*. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.
- 3.2 The Department for Education (DfE) has identified students as persistent absentees if they miss 10% or more of their own possible sessions and as severe absence if they have missed 50% or more of School.

Categories of attendance:

- 95% Good attendance
- 91% - 94% At risk of persistent absence
- <90% persistent absence
- 51% - 79% At risk of severe absence
- 50% Severe absence

- 3.3 Authorised absences are those mornings or afternoons that students are away from school for an unavoidable reason such as illness or where the Headmistress has granted a leave of absence (section 4). If the student is unfit for school, parents/carers should contact the School on the first day of absence, by telephone, to explain the reason for absence.
01775 722110 or email enquiries@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk.
- 3.4 If the student is absent for more than 3 days, parents/carers should keep the School updated on their condition and when they are likely to return to school.
- 3.5 Explanation for absence slips in students' planners may be filled out in advance for appointments that have to take place within the school day. Parents/carers are encouraged to book all medical/dental appointments, wherever possible, outside of school hours or in the school holidays. Form Tutors will fill in a leave permission slip which the student will hand in at the School Office as they leave, and the students' attendance code will be updated accordingly.
- 3.6 Unauthorised absences are those which the School does not consider unavoidable and for which no leave of absence has been granted (Section 4). Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not genuinely unavoidable. Examples of reasons that would not be authorised include concerts, shopping, as a 'treat.' Absences that are not properly explained will also be classed as unauthorised.
- 3.7 Local authorities and all schools have legal powers to use parenting contracts, education supervision orders (ESOs), attendance prosecution, parenting orders and fixed penalty notices to address poor attendance in school.
- 3.8 Punctuality – students must attend on time to be given an attendance mark for a session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents/carers are expected to ensure that their child is present at registration. Arriving more than 5 minutes after the start of a session, without good reason, will result in a late mark. If students arrive after 9am they must go to reception, sign in and explain the reason for their lateness.

- 3.9 For repeated patterns of lateness without good reason, students should be required to make up the time missed which may be via a departmental or pastoral detention (see Behaviour for Learning Policy.)

Section 4: Leave of absence

- 4.1 Permission to grant leave of absence rests with the Headmistress. Term time holidays will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. (*Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013*).
- 4.2 Should a parent/carer have a request for a leave of absence, it should be put in writing to the Headmistress at least two weeks in advance, earlier if possible. Making a request does not authorise an absence.
- 4.3 The Headmistress is still permitted to authorise absences that are classed as educational and requests for leave of absence for educational purposes (outside of the times of external or mock examinations) must be put in writing to the Headmistress for consideration at least two weeks in advance.
- 4.4 All unauthorised absence will be recorded on the student's file and may result in further action being taken.
- 4.5 Leave of absence will never be granted at times of either mock or external examinations. External examinations cannot be rearranged.

Section 5: Monitoring attendance

- 5.1 The role of the Form Tutor: –
- To complete a statutory electronic register at the beginning of each morning (by 9am) and afternoon session. The electronic register complies with the nationally agreed attendance codes for absence. The Attendance Officer will update the codes on the register as telephone calls are received from parents/carers;
 - To check any completed 'Explanation for Absence' slips in the students' planners, to discuss attendance with the student and alert the Attendance Officer/Head of Year to any concerns.
- 5.2 The role of the Class Teacher: –
- To complete the electronic register for every lesson as soon after the start of the lesson as is practicable and at least within the first 10 minutes of the lesson. The class teacher should alert the Attendance Officer/reception if any concerns arise, e.g. a student was present in morning registration but absent for their lesson without reason;
 - To respond to requests for work for students who are unable to attend school but well enough to complete work (e.g. COVID+, broken leg, EBSA) by the date requested.
- 5.3 The role of the Attendance Officer: –
- To monitor the statutory registers on a daily basis and to follow up any irregularities;
 - To take the phone calls from parents regarding absence and update the register codes accordingly;
 - To make first and third-day calls to parents/carers. First day calls are made to parents/carers whose children are absent, but we have not received parental notification on day 1 of absence. Third day calls are made to parents/carers whose children are still absent on day 3;
 - To prepare daily reports for HOYs/SLT in addition to fortnightly reports for pastoral meetings to look for trends and patterns;
 - To attend fortnightly pastoral meetings to discuss attendance of individual students;
 - To work closely with parents, students and staff over individual cases where attendance is an issue. To send staged attendance concern letters home (less than 90% attendance triggers a stage 1 letter, stage 2

letter then follows if there has been no improvement). The Stage 2 letter also triggers an attendance panel meeting;

- If the attendance of a student becomes a more significant cause for concern, to complete the New Notification Survey submitted to the LA in liaison with the SEND department;
- To share daily attendance data with the LA via Wonde;
- The Attendance Officer/HOY may make a home visit and/or may initiate further action via the Local Authority such as an Education Supervision Order;
- To administer the Attendance Reward Scheme (section 6).

5.4 The role of the Head of Year: –

- In collaboration with the Form Tutors and the Attendance Officer, to promote good attendance, monitor the attendance of their year group, and update the cause for concern lists as appropriate;
- To work with the Attendance Officer to contact home if issues arise;
- To attend Attendance Panel Meetings and set up Pastoral Support Plans as necessary;
- To liaise with the SENDCO to initiate the EBSA ladder where significant barriers to attendance exist and, if the need arises, to make a home visit (with another member of staff, during the School Day).

5.5 The role of the SENDCO: -

- In collaboration with the Attendance Officer, to monitor the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or EAL;
- To attend Attendance Panel Meetings, and if the need arises to make home visits for those pupils;
- To liaise with the Attendance Officer regarding any temporary reduced timetables on Wonde.
- To liaise with Head of Years to initiate the EBSA ladder where significant barriers to attendance exist for all pupils, not just those with additional needs;
- To collaborate with Head of Years and/or to initiate Early Help and mental health referrals where appropriate for pupils with additional needs;
- To use the Valuing SEND tool to evaluate current provision, and to help identify any possible unmet additional needs, for any pupil on the EBSA ladder;
- To attend link meetings for pupils on roll at any alternative provision provider;
- To work with the Attendance officer to monitor the attendance of pupils attending an alternative provision provider;
- To conduct visits to all alternative provision providers.

5.6 The role of the Pastoral Support Assistant: –

- To support individual students with attendance issues and support the work of the Form Tutors, Attendance Officer and Head of Year.

5.7 The role of the SLT with strategic responsibility for attendance: -

- To ensure a clear school Attendance Policy is in place and updated yearly. That expectations, procedures and responsibilities are understood and followed by all leaders, staff, students, parents and governors;
- To be responsible for preventing poor attendance through effective whole school attendance management and to ensure that early intervention takes place to reduce absence before it becomes habitual;
- To lead on additional targeted support for persistently and severely absent students; (See section 7.2)
- To safeguard our most vulnerable students by monitoring their attendance (CFC meetings) and supporting them to come to school by working collaboratively with other schools, local authorities and partners to provide support and remove barriers to attendance;
- To prepare and present an annual Attendance Executive Summary to governors to outline the School and County priorities and to compare the School data to National Data, to look at trends over time, percentage absence by category and individual case studies.

5.8 The role of the governors: -

- To appoint a link governor with responsibility for attendance;
- To take an active role in attendance improvement and support the School to prioritise attendance, making attendance a central part of the School's ethos;
- To set high expectations of all leaders, staff, students and parents;
- To take responsibility for the strategic development of attendance at the School, to critically analyse and evaluate the data and ensure that this policy and our procedures are being followed and carried out effectively.

5.9 The role of the Headmistress: -

- To ensure compliance with regulations;
- To support staff in addressing issues as and when they arise;
- To ensure governors are aware of their responsibilities;
- To challenge staff who are not adhering to this policy and the School's procedures.

Section 6: Promoting Full Attendance

- 6.1 Parents receive weekly information about their child's attendance via the SIMS Parent App. They also receive summary information on termly progress cards and the annual report and at any other time when the School has concerns about a student's attendance rate. Full attendance is encouraged by all staff, especially Form Tutors (during form time and PHSCE) and by Heads of Year in Assemblies. There is an attendance section in the students' planners.
- 6.2 The Year 7 form with the highest termly attendance (3 terms) is awarded the 'Attend Well Bear' (AttWell Bear) to keep in their form room for the term.
- 6.3 In order to recognise excellent attendance the School runs an attendance reward scheme. Should a student's attendance be above 95% at the end of the year then they will be entered into the attendance raffle draw.
- 6.4 Attendance certificates will be awarded in the Achievement Assemblies (terms 4 and 6) for students whose attendance is above 95% in terms 1 and 2 (term 4 award) and terms 3 and 4 (term 6 award).
- 6.5 Attendance excellents will be awarded on a two-week basis for any student who has had 100% attendance over the preceding two weeks.
- 6.6 At the end of the year, house points are awarded to students who have attendance above 95%.
- 6.7 100% attendance certificates are awarded on a yearly basis and special certificates are awarded to students whose attendance is above 97% during their school career.

Section 7: Work missed due to absence

- 7.1 If students are too ill to attend School, they are not expected to complete the work at home and should not request work from staff. Students need to remember that absence from school causes a number of problems e.g. missing vital explanations in lessons and having to find the time to catch up on return. They should only miss school if it is unavoidable.
- If the student is well enough to do some work, they could carry out some private reading or project work, check Microsoft Teams to see if the work for the day has been saved there or complete online activities;
 - Students could keep in touch with schoolwork by speaking to a friend who may be able to collect work, make a note of homework set and perhaps photocopy notes made in class or collect worksheets/handouts;

- On return to school it is the student's responsibility to catch up with work that has been missed and to seek help from staff as necessary;
- In cases of prolonged absence or if additional support is needed, the student should talk to their Form Tutor, Head of Year or another member of the Pastoral Team;
- In exceptional circumstances, when absence is for a prolonged period, it may be possible for the School to provide work in some subjects. When work is sent home in these situations, parents need to ensure that the completed tasks are returned to school so that an element of continuity can be ensured;
- Work will not be set for students taking holidays during term time (section 4).

7.2 Persistent and severe absence: -

Categories of attendance:

- <90% Persistent absence
 - 51% - 79% At risk of severe absence
 - 50% Severe absence
- Where absence escalates and students' attendance drops, the School will put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these students;
 - As a School we will always sensitively consider the reasons for absence and put supportive rather than punitive strategies into place;
 - The Lincolnshire Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Ladder will be adopted to support students with school avoidance due to their mental health and well-being;
 - For severely absent students, the School will work with partners to prioritise support for the student and their family, this could include consideration for an education, health and care plan (EHCP) or an alternative form of educational provision;
 - In cases where we consider it to be a safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will report this to the Children's Social Care (CSC.)

7.3 If there is non-engagement with support and it is deemed necessary, the School will make use of the following interventions: -

- Parenting contracts;
- Education supervision orders;
- Attendance prosecution;
- Parenting orders;
- Fixed penalty notices.

'Working together to improve school attendance' Guidance for schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities May 2022.

APPENDIX 1

