

SPALDING HIGH SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

HEADMISTRESS:		Mrs M K ANDERSON
LINK GOVERNOR:	(STANDARDS AND SEND) (SAFEGUARDING)	Mrs D MULLEY Mr E FRAGALE
DATE AGREED:		June 2018
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.

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:

'School attendance guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.' November 2016 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance> Full credit is given to these documents in this policy.

Links to related policies:

Behaviour for Learning Policy
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Anti-bullying Policy

Chairman of Governors

Date

Headmistress

Date

Section 1: Rationale

- 1.1 Spalding High School is committed to working with parents as the best way of ensuring that attendance is as high as possible and that every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. The School has a legal duty to publish its attendance figures and to promote high attendance. Students should come to school every day. It is for the Headmistress to authorise absence, not the parent/carer.
- 1.2 There is a strong link between full attendance and excellent achievement. Research shows that persistent absence can have a very negative impact on the grades achieved in examinations.
- 1.3 Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their daughter/son attends school. By law, parents whose children are of compulsory school age and registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they fail to do this, they may be guilty of an offence and may receive a penalty notice or be prosecuted under the *Education (Penalty Notices, England) Regulations 2007, amended 2013*.

Section 2: Regulations regarding absence

- 2.1 Students should only be absent if it is unavoidable. Allowing a pupil 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 written information about the cause of each absence is always required (section 2.3).
- 2.2 Since the beginning of the 2015/16 academic year, the Department for Education (DfE) has identified students as persistent absentees if they miss 10% or more of their own possible sessions.
- 2.3 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 3). 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. If the student is absent for more than 3 days, parents/carers should keep the School updated on their daughter/son's condition and when they are likely to return to school. On return to school, the student must show a completed 'Explanation for Absence' slip (in their planner) to their form tutor, explaining the reason for absence, written and signed by the parent/carer. Absences will not be authorised without this slip.
- 2.4 Explanation for absence slips may also 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.
- 2.5 Unauthorised absences are those which the School does not consider unavoidable and for which no leave of absence has been granted (Section 3). 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.
- 2.6 Local authorities and all schools have legal powers to use education supervision orders, parenting contracts and penalty notices to address poor attendance in school.
- 2.7 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 daughter/son 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.
- 2.8 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.

Section 3: Leave of absence

- 3.1 Permission to grant leave of absence rests with the Headmistress. Term time holidays will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. (*Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013*).
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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 School examinations) must be put in writing to the Headmistress for consideration at least two weeks in advance.
- 3.4 All unauthorised absence will be recorded on the student's file and may result in further action being taken by the School or Local Authority.
- 3.5 Leave of absence will never be granted at times of either the School or external examinations. External examinations cannot be rearranged. If a student has unauthorised absence during the School exams the student may not be able to take the papers and if they do sit the papers, the marks will not be recorded.

Section 4: Monitoring attendance

4.1 The role of the Form Tutor –

- To complete a statutory electronic register at the beginning of each morning 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 the 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. The Attendance Officer will provide form tutors with a weekly report of attendance and codes used.

4.2 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. 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 by the date requested.

4.3 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 prepare daily reports for HOYs/SLT in addition to weekly reports to look for trends and patterns;
- 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 Lincolnshire County Council 'Pupils not attending regularly' snap survey to make the Local Authority aware of the issue;
- 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 5)

4.4 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, if the need arises, to make home visits and set up Pastoral Support Plans.

4.5 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.

Section 5: Promoting Full Attendance

- 5.1 Parents receive information about their daughter's/son's attendance on their progress cards and 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.
- 5.2 The Year 7 form with the highest termly attendance (6 terms) is awarded the 'Attend Well Bear' (AttWell Bear) to keep in their form room for the term.
- 5.3 In order to recognise excellent attendance the School runs an attendance reward scheme. Should a student's attendance be above 97% at the end of each main term then they will be entered into the attendance raffle draw. If a student's attendance is 100% for the School year they will be entered into the final prize draw for a more substantial reward.
- 5.4 Lincolnshire County Council 100% attendance certificates are issued on a yearly basis and special certificates are awarded to students whose attendance is above 97% during their school career.

Section 6: Prolonged absence

6.2 The responsibilities of the student if they are absent from school:-

- If the student is well enough to do some work they could carry out some private reading or project work;
- To keep in touch with school work 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;
- To ask for books to be sent home or collected;
- 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.

6.3 The responsibilities of the student on their return to school:-

- If a student has been absent from school it is her/his responsibility to catch up with the work that has been missed;
- To approach their subject teachers to seek help and support in catching up on missed work;
- To seek additional support if necessary from their Form Tutor, Head of Year, Pastoral Support Staff.

Section 7: Requesting work from school

7.1 In exceptional circumstances, when absence is for a prolonged period, it may be possible for the School to provide work in some subjects at parental request. Notice of at least 3 days is required to provide work. In some subjects oral explanations are vital so meaningful work may be very difficult to set. It also becomes increasingly difficult to set work in any subject where new topics are covered. 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 3).