



# **Spaldwick Community Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy**

Person Responsible: Headteacher, Governors  
Review Date: Biennial  
Distribution to: All staff, Governors

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Policy adopted Governors

## 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. School procedures

### 3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:10pm.

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health - by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). If the school is not notified, parents will receive a call from the attendance officer to check the reason for the absence.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

We will report to parents on their child's attendance record, annually in the written end-of-year report.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are "rare, significant, unavoidable, short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- The death of a close relative and attendance at a funeral
- Respite care of a looked after child
- A housing crisis which prevents attendance

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

### **Examples of situations that may result in an unauthorised absence**

- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt
- Family holiday, there is no longer a provision for Head teachers to authorise term time holidays. Therefore these absences are always unauthorised

### **Flexi-schooling**

- All flexi-schooling requests will be considered on an individual basis. Where flexi-schooling is introduced it will be reviewed fortnightly with the aim to increase hours rapidly until the child is attending school full time.

## **4.2 Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## **5. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Attendance is promoted in school during fortnightly assemblies when a cup is awarded to the class with the highest attendance.

Attendance figures are shared with parents in the termly newsletter.

At the end of the academic year children with 100% attendance are rewarded with a certificate.

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a fortnightly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

We collect attendance data using our in school data management system, this is necessary to enable us to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing body**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **7.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 The attendance officer**

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **7.4 Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **7.5 Office staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy