



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Review Date: September 2020

### **Introduction**

Spalding Monkshouse Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance and punctuality are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and underpins our ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school

For our children to gain their greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable.

Poor attendance can seriously affect a child's:

- Learning and attainment in school
- Relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- Confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason can result in prosecution.

We encourage all parents to give a high priority to regular school attendance and work with them to ensure positive attitudes towards attendance are developed. Attendance related help, support and advice is available from school.

### **Aims**

- To promote excellent attendance and punctuality in order to ensure continuity of education and maximise children's academic potential.
- To monitor attendance and punctuality effectively so difficulties are quickly highlighted.

- To ensure that parents are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and to work with parents if difficulties arise.
- To work alongside other agencies including the Educational Welfare Service, if difficulties arise, so that effective action can be put into place.
- To ensure that pupils understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality by rewarding children who achieve it.
- To make everyone, including pupils, families, school staff and governors, aware of the detrimental effect of absences and lateness on the education of the children.

### Understanding Attendance

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

96%+	<b>Excellent</b> – Well done! This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports appositve work ethic.
94-95%	<b>Average</b> – Well done, strive to build on this.
91-93%	<b>Poor</b> – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Please work with the school urgently to improve the situation.
Below 90%	<b>Unacceptable</b> – Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It IS affecting attainment and is disrupting your child's learning. We will work with you to plan for an improvement. If this does not happen we may have to involve the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

- In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.
- Prior to the engagement of the EWO, the school will issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupils' absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need to EWO involvement.

### Promoting regular attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils, and all members of the school staff.

To help us all focus on this we will:

- Inform parents well in advance of all school holiday dates.
- Give details on attendance regularly in the school newsletter
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Award an attendance trophy at the end of each term - presented by a Governor.
- Prepare special certificates for children who maintain 100% throughout the year.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below an acceptable level

### **Understanding types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the registers have closed without a reasonable explanation.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. Parents who are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems.

### **Persistent Absenteeism**

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for **whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is

at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan.

### **Absence procedures**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Parents are required to telephone, e-mail or call into school to report the absence on the morning of the first day of absence and on each day thereafter. If the school has not been informed about a child's absence by close of registration then they will contact the main carer in the first instance. Parents/carers should ensure we have up-to-date contact numbers at all times.

If no response is received from the parents the school will report the matter **after 10 days absence** to the 'child missing education' team.

Parents may be invited to discuss the situation and a plan may be drawn up to endeavour to improve attendance. If attendance does not improve following the meeting the school may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer.

The EWO will try to resolve the situation by agreement, but if all else fails and unauthorised absences persist then sanctions may be used (Education Act 1996)

Leave of absence must be formally requested from, and agreed by, the Headteacher, forms are available from the office. However amendments made to the Education (pupil registration)(England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that the Headteacher **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** that warrant the granting of leave. On receipt of the forms the Headteacher will advise of a decision or invite parents/carers in for further discussion

### **Monitoring absence:**

At Monkshouse we monitor both attendance and punctuality very carefully as we want to make sure we give our children the best start in life.

Each term office staff print out each child's attendance and this is monitored. The Headteacher and the attendance officer meet to discuss any areas of concern and a designated governor is kept informed of any issues. Parents may have access to this by contacting the office.

There is a staged process of letters and referrals dependent upon a child's level of attendance.

The Governing Body, through the Headteacher's report and the input from the designated Governor, monitors the level of attendance throughout the school and the impact of authorised and unauthorised absence on the school's targets.

**Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the school day they can miss work and vital information relating to the day ahead. Late arrivals also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

**How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at 8.45. Gates are opened at 8.40 and children can go immediately to their classrooms. Registers are marked twice daily (at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions). A child will receive a late mark if they are not in school by that time. Registers close 20 minutes after being taken. In accordance with regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If the child has a persistent late record parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but school can be approached at any time there are having problems getting a child to school on time.

Trends in lateness are monitored in the same way that absence is.

**School Targets**

The school sets targets each year to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. The minimum level of attendance in this school is 95%. Our target is to achieve better than this as we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

**Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents to ensure that children achieve as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher on behalf of the Governing Body

Date: \_\_\_\_\_