



# ATTENDANCE POLICY



**To be reviewed: September 2019**  
**Responsibility of: Attendance Officer**

**Mission statement**

Springwell Lincolnshire seeks to ensure that all its young people receive a full-time education, which maximises opportunities in order for the young person to fulfil their true potential.

Springwell Lincolnshire is a collaboration of 4 academies across Lincolnshire; Lincoln, Grantham Mablethorpe and Spalding (temporary site Boston). All our schools, aim to provide a positive, welcoming, nurturing, safe and learning-focused environment. All staff are committed to working with the young people and their families to ensure each student attends regularly and punctually.

Springwell Lincolnshire treats all its young people as individuals and appreciates that some find attending school stressful. However, we are confident with the support of the families we can successfully overcome such barriers and ensure the young person receives the most appropriate education package.

It is the responsibility of the young people and their parent/carer(s) to ensure they attend their provision within Springwell Lincolnshire, as required by law in accordance with the Education Act 2002.

**Aims**

- 1. To improve the overall attendance percentage of our young people within Springwell Lincolnshire**
- 2. To reward positive attendance and recognise the efforts of the young person and their families**
- 3. To ensure parent/carers feel supported and there is a consistent approach for addressing non-attendance**



### **1. To improve the overall attendance percentage of our young people at Springwell Lincolnshire**

The attendance target for the whole setting is 95%, which is the national target for all schools. We will strive to achieve this target for all our young people but we recognise that some arrive with circumstances and difficulties, which may make this even more challenging for them to achieve, e.g. anxieties around school, difficult home circumstances etc. We will work with the young people and their families in order to improve their attendance and provide them with the most appropriate educational package.

The impact positive school attendance has on a young person's life is priceless. All parent/carers want the best for their child(ren) and supporting regular school attendance is a huge step in ensuring they have strong foundations for a successful adulthood.

### **2. To reward positive attendance and recognise the efforts of the young person and their families**

All our academies, we aim to ensure all our young people and their families feel valued with regards to positive attendance, including consistent positive attendance and also those who have made a conscious effort to improve their attendance.

We aim to offer a positive learning experience, in which the young people believe they are understood and can achieve greatness. However, we want ensure we also recognise positive attendance. Every week the young people with excellent or improved attendance will be congratulated by their Head of School; this could be through verbal praise or by the academy's reward policy.

As well as rewarding the young person, Springwell Lincolnshire would like to recognise the work/support of the parents/carers. Parent/carers of those children with outstanding attendance and most improved attendance each half term will receive a letter / postcard of appreciation.

### **3. To ensure parent/carers feel supported and there is a consistent approach for addressing non-attendance**

It is vital the parents/carers understand that contact from the academy is in the best interest of their child(ren) and we want to support and work with families where school attendance is a challenge. We aim to create a positive and honest working relationship with all our families and we hope by offering a high level of support, together we can overcome any obstacles affecting school attendance. There must be an emphasis on "teamwork", ensuring we work together, which will provide us with the greatest opportunity for success and positive change.

It is the parents/carers' responsibility to contact their child's school with regards to any absence on a daily basis and where required provide any medical evidence. At each Academy, Springwell Lincolnshire has dedicated administration staff, who will make daily contact where a parents/carers has failed to contact the appropriate centre. This will be reported to the Head of School and the Attendance Officer.

A child who fails to attend school for 3 days or whose overall attendance is of concern will be picked up by the Attendance & Pastoral Team, where a safe and well visit will take place. We would hope as a team we can formulate a plan to ensure the child's attendance improves and any medical needs are supported in the most appropriate way. However, if attendance continues to fall and Springwell Lincolnshire fails in its attempts to engage the young person and their family, the Attendance Team may decide to follow the attendance procedure, adhering to the DfE School Attendance Guidance. This is decided on an individual basis, considering all factors surrounding the young person and the family, in



order to have the most positive impact. This could include a fixed penalty notice or Education Supervision Order.

## **Expectations**

### **We expect the following from our young people:**

- That they attend our academies every day as required
- That they arrive on time or are ready for their taxi collection time (a number of our young people are transported by taxi – good communication between home and school is vital as transport is provided by the Local Authority)
- That they inform staff of any problem(s) that may prevent them from attending

### **We expect the following from parents/carers:**

- To ensure their child(ren) attend school. The law states that this is the parents/carers' responsibility. Arrival after registration can be treated as an absence for legal purposes
- To support their child(ren) in achieving maximum attendance. We request that a child is not allowed to remain at home for minor complaints or illnesses. If they are fit enough to be up and about, they are fit enough to be in school
- To ensure that they contact the school giving an explanation for absence on the first day and then on any subsequent days, if necessary. Medical evidence will be required for students missing 3 or more days

### **What the young person and parent/carers can expect from the school**

Each academy is responsible in ensuring we provide our young people with a full time / most appropriate educational package, as well as working in collaboration with our families and following DfE guidance in order to encourage positive attendance.

### **Non-attendance procedure:**

Each academy aims to have all our young people attending their provision but we do recognise that sometimes this will not always occur.

As stated within "expectations", if a young person is unable to attend their provision the parent/carer must notify the centre before the start of each school day. If this has not occurred, the relevant academy will attempt to make contact and this will happen each day the child is absent. However, if a student's absence goes beyond 3 days, further support / action will be triggered (including a safe and well visit) in order to try and address any barrier(s).

As an academy we must ensure we are doing everything possible in encouraging a young person to attend their provision. We will always work with the young person and their family in supporting their attendance. However, if this does not have the desired impact, we will challenge those young people and their parent/carer(s) who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. The Academy may follow school guidance regarding non-attendance, which could result in legal action being taken. Each individual case will be assessed and further action will be taken based the school attendance procedure and factors surrounding that young person. This procedure will incorporate letters home, meetings with students, meetings with parent/carers, home visits and/or 'Safe and Well' checks by the Attendance & Pastoral team and even the notifying the police and social services.



## Dual Registration

If a young person is accessing an intervention placement, they will be dual registered, the mainstream school being the 'main' registration and a Springwell Lincolnshire academy being the 'subsidiary' registration group. We expect the mainstream school to contact the relevant Springwell Lincolnshire academy with regards to daily attendance. We will continue to follow our attendance procedures, including daily phone calls and safe and well visits after 3 days of absence but the mainstream school are responsible with regards to further action on non-attendance. Where we are particularly concerned, the Springwell Lincolnshire Attendance Officer will notify the mainstream school and offer support where necessary.

## Persistent Absence (PA):

A young person is classed as a persistent absentee if they have an attendance of 90% or less. This is whether or absences have been authorised or not by the school.

## Leave of Absence:

Section 7 of the Educational Act 1996 places upon parents/carers a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Where a child is a registered pupil at a school, their parents/carers are liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.

In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled, section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60 or £120 per adult per child.

Government regulations state that when it comes to dealing with request for leave of absence, schools are no longer permitted to authorise family holidays or time off for other family occasions, as they are not classed as exceptional circumstances. The law also states that parents/carers do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for leave of absence during term time. Schools can use Section 444B of the Education Act 1996 to issue Fixed Penalty Fines for non-attendance. A Fixed Penalty Fine may be issued to each parent/carer with parental responsibility, for each child.

All requests for leave of absence must be made in writing at least six weeks before the absence is due to start, giving details, dates and a full explanation of why leave of absence is required. All requests are looked at individually and further evidence may be sought as required. You will receive a reply in writing.

We strongly advise that you seek advice from the academy before making any booking. Any leave of absence taken without prior notification to the school beforehand will automatically be unauthorised, regardless of the explanation given after the event.

## Categorising Absence:

From September 2006 all schools were required to use a common set of codes to record student attendance and absence. Only the school, in the context of the law, can authorise absence, not parents. A note or explanation from parents/carers does not guarantee authorisation. If we do not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid or legal reason, then the absence will be unauthorised by the Attendance & Welfare Officer.



Schools are not obliged to authorise medical or dental appointments taken during the school day. Parent/carers are asked not to make these appointments unless vital or due to an emergency. Evidence will be required and, if not received, the absence will be unauthorised.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence:**

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory. If a student absence is persistent due to medical reasons, we may request documentation from the student's doctor or hospital if there is an ongoing condition. Failure to provide this will mean the school will be unable to authorise further absence.

### **The following activities will be authorised:**

- Field trips and educational visits
- Interviews with prospective employers and places at a higher or further educational establishment
- Students receiving approved education off site

### **Absences will not be authorised under the following circumstance:**

- Shopping trips
- Leave of absence in term time where the permission of the school has not been given
- Minding the house or looking after siblings or family members
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be verified
- No reason given

Usual circumstances may arise that lead to a student being absent from school. It is for the Attendance & Welfare Officer, in liaison with the Head of Centre and Executive Vice Principal, to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable.

### **Punctuality:**

The school will actively encourage punctuality by challenging students who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation.

### **Missing Children:**

If a child is absent for a longer period than 10 days and Springwell Lincoln City Academy has received no notification as to why, they will be referred to as 'CME' and placed on the 'Child Missing in Education' register. This may result in them being taken off the school roll.

### **Liaising with various agencies wherever appropriate:**

Research has shown that school that work in partnership with a full arrange if support services have a greater impact upon school attendance than when they act alone or when support services are poorly coordinated.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range or institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of



the school. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with the young people to ensure that educational opportunities are maximised.

These are the main support services that the school may involve in order to support students, parent/carers in achieving the highest level of attendance:

- Educational Psychologist
- Special Educational Needs Service
- Social Care
- County Council Children's Services (Parent Partnership, Parent Support Advisors, and Youth Workers)
- The Youth Offending Service
- CAMHS
- Police
- GP's and Nurse Practitioners
- School Nurse

### **Appendix**

- Parent/carer's Attendance Summary
- Academy flow chart for non-attendance
- Attendance Warning letter
- Final Warning letter
- Fixed Penalty Notice
- Education Supervision Order

### **Legislation:**

- The Education Act 1996 - Sections 434 & 458
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018
- Human Right Act 1998
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- School Standards & Framework Act 1998
- School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (2018)
- The Education (pupil registration) (England) regulations 2006
- The Education (pupil registration) (England) (Amendment) regulations 2010, 2011, 2013 & 2016
- The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) regulations 2007
- The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) regulations 2010