

SPRINGWELL LEARNING COMMUNITY - LINCOLNSHIRE



Attendance Policy

<u>DATE POLICY WRITTEN:</u>	<u>September 2020</u>
<u>GOVERNOR RATIFICATION DATE:</u>	<u>15th October 2020</u>
<u>DATE OF REVIEW:</u>	<u>September 2021</u>

Mission statement

Springwell Learning Community 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.

The setting is split across several academies; Lincoln, Spalding, Grantham, Mablethorpe, as well as offering Targeted Intervention and work placement opportunities county wide, all of which 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 Learning Community Lincolnshire treats all its young people as individuals and appreciates that some find attending school worrying and demanding. 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 the Springwell Learning Community Lincolnshire as required by law in accordance with the Education Act 2002.

Aims

- 1. To improve the overall attendance percentage of our young people at all academies.**
- 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 Learning Community 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 and prepares them for their next step towards fulfilling their best achievements. 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**

Springwell Learning Community Lincolnshire aims to ensure all our young people and their families feel valued with regards to positive attendance, including consistent daily 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. We want to ensure we also recognise positive attendance. Every week the young people with excellent or improved attendance will be congratulated by their Head of School/Executive Vice Principal; this could be through verbal praise or by the academy's reward policy.

As well as rewarding the young person, we 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. Each of our academies have dedicated administration staff, who will make daily contact where a parent/carer has failed to contact the appropriate school. This will be reported to the Head of School/Executive Vice Principal and Pastoral/Parent Support Team..

A child who fails to attend School for 3 days or whose overall attendance is of concern will be picked up by the Head of School/Executive Vice Principal. 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 Learning Community Lincolnshire fails in its attempts to engage the young person and their family, the Head of School/Executive Vice Principal will continue to follow the attendance procedure, adhering to the DfE School Attendance Guidance.

Expectations

We expect the following from our young people:

- That they attend their academy 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 absent for 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 or 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:

Springwell Learning Community Lincolnshire aims to have all our young people attending their provision, but we do recognise that sometimes this will not always be possible.

As stated within "expectations", if a young person is unable to attend their provision the parent/carer must notify the school before the start of each school day. If this has not happened, the relevant school will attempt to make contact each and every day the child is absent. However, if a student's absence goes beyond 3 days, further support / action will be triggered 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 will 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 on the school attendance procedure. This procedure will incorporate letters home, meetings with students, meetings with parent/carers, home visits and/or 'Safe and Well' checks by the Pastoral/Parent Support Team and even the police.

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 not absences have been authorised 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 to the Executive Principle 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 in school time. You will receive a reply in writing.

We strongly advise that you apply or seek advice from the school 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 Head of School/Executive Vice Principal..

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, Springwell Alternative Academy 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, new schools and places at a higher or further educational establishment*
 - Students receiving approved education off site
 - YOS meetings*
 - Addaction*
 - CAHMS*
- * Official written evidence / appointment letters are required

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

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a student being absent from school. It is for the Pastoral/Parent Support Team, in liaison with the Head of School/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.

Pupils not attending regularly:

If a child misses 10 consecutive school days this will be reported to the LEA as a “PNAR” – Pupil Not Attending Regularly.

Missing Children:

If a child is absent for a longer period than 5 days and Springwell Learning Community Lincolnshire 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 schools that work in partnership with a full range of 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 of 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 and 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 Early Help Workers)
- CAMHS
- Police
- GP’s and Nurse Practitioners
- School Nursing Service
- Addaction
- YOS

Legislation:

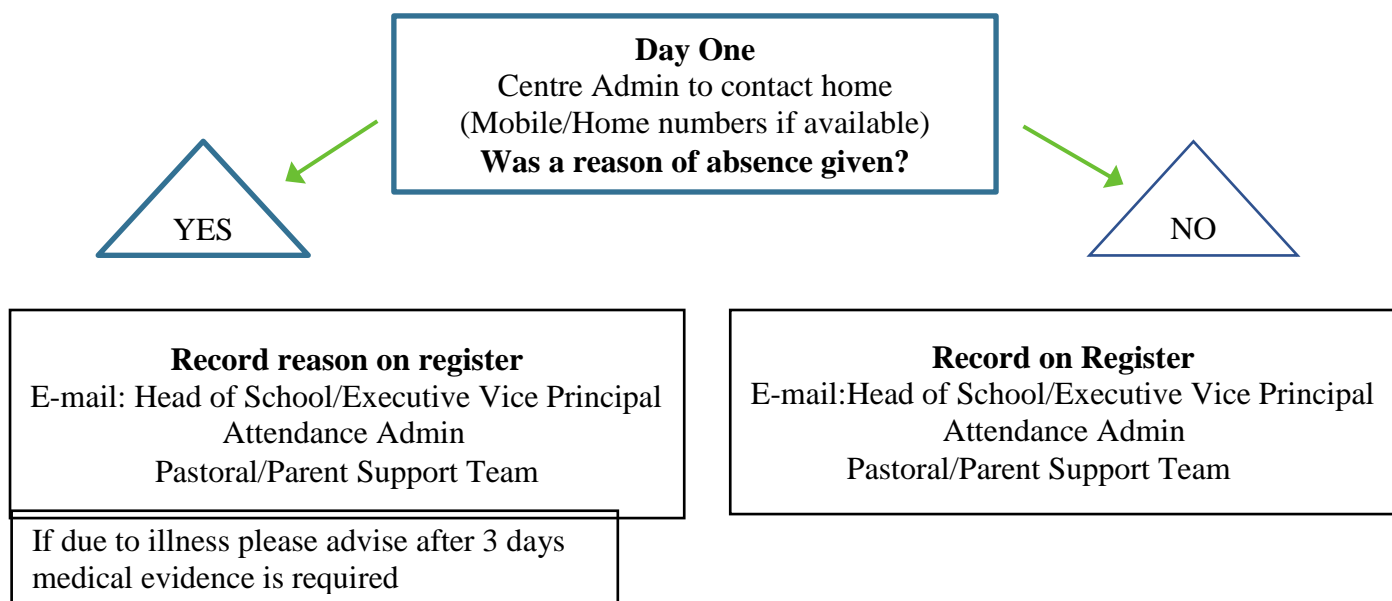
- The Education Act 1996 - Sections 434 & 458
- Human Right Act 1998
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- School Standards & Framework Act 1998
- The Education (pupil registration) (England) regulations 2006
- The Education (pupil registration) (England) (Amendment) regulations 2010, 2011, 2013 & 2016
- The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) regulations 2007
- The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) regulations 2010

Appendix

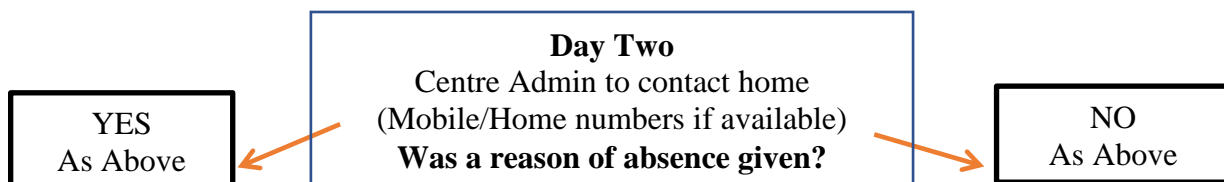
The following pages show the appendices in the following order:

- Attendance Monitoring Sheet
- Academy flow chart for non-attendance
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- Fixed Penalty Warning
- Fixed Penalty Formal Warning – Holiday Absence
- Irregular Attendance – Formal Warning
- Irregular Attendance – Final Warning

Springwell Alternative Academy Non-attendance Procedure



Dual Main Students
Centre admin to contact school to check attendance then e-mail through to:
Head of School/Executive Vice Principal, Attendance Admin, Pastoral/Parent Support Team



Day Three
Centre Admin to contact home
(Mobile/Home numbers if available)
3 Day Safe & Well Check Notification sent to
Pastoral/Parent Support Team / Head of School/Executive
Vice Principal

**Update to be given to Pastoral/Parent Support Team
Head of School/Executive Vice Principal**

*Covid-19 amendment:
In the event of a whole school closure/self-isolation 3 Day safe
& well checks will be carried dependent on engagement and
the pupil's individual circumstances. Daily contact, virtual or by
phone will be recorded as child safe and well.

Dear Parent/Carer

Re:

DoB:

Attendance:

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: FIXED PENALTY WARNING

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents 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 and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is 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 £60.00 or £120.00.**

This letter is a formal **Fixed Penalty Warning** and is being sent to you because your child has an unacceptable level of unauthorised absence.

During the period **Date – Date**, **Child's Name** was absent from school for *** sessions out of ***, of which *** were unauthorised. This continues to be an unacceptable rate of attendance. **Child's Name** attendance will be reviewed 14 school days from the date of this warning, with the expectation that **Child's Name** attendance increases to 100%. Failure to comply will result in a Fixed Penalty being issued. You need to continue to obtain medical notes from your GP each time **Child's Name** is off and let me have these. Without medical notes absences will continue to be unauthorised by the school. Requesting the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children attending their school under the legal framework shown above.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further or to access appropriate support, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above telephone number or the Headteacher of your child's school.

Yours sincerely

Head of School / Executive Vice Principal

Date

Dear

FIXED PENALTY FORMAL WARNING

NAME OF CHILD/YOUNG PERSON:

DATE OF BIRTH:

PUPIL REGISTERED AT:

This letter is a **Fixed Penalty Formal Warning** and is being sent to you because you have requested a period of absence from school for your child during term time.

During the period you have requested from to , is not deemed to be exceptional circumstances and therefore will be coded as unauthorised absence. If you choose to ignore this warning, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for the above period of absence.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children attending their school under the following legal framework:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents 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 and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is 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 £60.00 or £120.00.**

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the school on the above contact details.

Yours sincerely

Head of School/Executive Vice Principal

Date

Dear

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: FORMAL WARNING

NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:

DATE OF BIRTH:

REGISTERED PUPIL AT:

I need to draw your attention to the fact that parents have a duty in law to ensure their child attends school regularly, unless they are unable to do so by reason of ill-health or other legally acceptable reason.

During the period , was absent from school on out of a possible half-day sessions and no valid reasons have been provided. This is an unacceptable rate of attendance and I attach for your information, a copy of the Pupil Absence Record Sheet.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure their child receives suitable efficient full time education either by regular attendance at school or education otherwise. Section 444 (1)(a) of the same Act states that where a parent of a child who knowingly and without reasonable justification fails to ensure regular attendance of a registered pupil at that school, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against that Section. The Local Education Authority may, where necessary, institute legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under this section of the Education Act 1996 against those parents concerned. Alternatively Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Education Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.

Please contact the school to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

Head of School/Executive Vice Principal

Date

Dear

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: FINAL WARNING TO PARENTS

NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:

DATE OF BIRTH:

REGISTERED PUPIL AT:

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly thereat, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against that Section.

TAKE NOTICE that the Local Education Authority considers that you have been guilty of a breach of the law in that you have failed, despite this matter having been previously brought to your attention, to send regularly and punctually to school in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 1996. In view of this you have made yourself liable to be summoned before a Magistrates Court for each alleged offence.

This warning is issued in the hope that there may be no necessity to take further steps to enforce the law. However, you are warned that if you do not cause to attend school regularly, proceedings will be taken against you. You do not have to answer this letter and may well wish to seek the advice of a solicitor.

Yours sincerely

Head of School/Executive Vice Principal