



Spalding Parish Church of England Day School

5th October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance at SPCEDS

At Spalding Parish we have always worked hard with families to try and ensure positive rates of attendance. Whilst this does continue to be the case, it is an area that continues to present challenges and as such we will, in line with the DfE Working Together to Improve Attendance document, be continuing to focus on this important area of school life this coming year. When parliamentary time allows, this DfE guidance will become law. We are proud of our relationship with pupils and with parents/carers and, as part of this, look forward to working with you to further increase attendance at school.

As with the national picture of attendance, we have seen changes in attendance since the pandemic. Whilst the majority of pupils at Spalding Parish do achieve the national annual expected attendance rate of 95% or above, we have, since the pandemic had a growing number of students with annual attendance rates of between 90-95% and also within the lower categories. Within the new regulations, pupils with annual attendance rates of between 90-95% are described as "At risk of persistent absence". Not only has the number of pupils in this group increased since the pandemic, but the pattern of non-attendance has also changed within school.

Post-pandemic, we have seen an increase in odd days off here and there across a month or short periods of two-three days across a term. When all of these periods of short absence are added up, they can amount to as much as a full week per term or four to six weeks across the whole year. This can affect social and academic engagement, progress and attainment. Post pandemic we have also seen a shift in the reasons for absence. Prior to the pandemic illness related absence was very specific and for longer periods such as a week off with flu or tonsillitis. Last year we saw an increase in generic reasons such as "sick" or "ill". We would ask parents/carers to be very specific in the reasons for absence when they write notes/emails into school this year and require a more exact description of the reason for absence. We will be following up on all generic related absences.

We would also ask that all parents/carers support us in ensuring their child attends school every single day unless they are truly too unwell to be here.

You will have received your child's annual attendance percentage for 2022/23 with their Term 5/6 Report sent home in the summer. Attendance summaries for Term 1 will also be sent home with the Term 1/2 reports in Term 2. We would ask that you please check this against the following government categories to see where your child sits in terms of their attendance.



PART OF THE TRANSFORMATIONAL
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|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 95% and above: | Expected |
| 91-94%: | At Risk of Persistent Absence |
| 80-90%: | Persistent Absence |
| 51-79%: | At Risk of Severe Absence |
| Less than 50%: | Severe Absence |

The link to the full DfE document can be found below here [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) and states:

“The law requires every parent to make sure their child receives education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.”

As part of our duty with regards to school attendance we will continue to liaise with parents/carers where there are concerns with attendance, in line with the guidance. The intention of this is to identify if school can support with improving attendance in any way so we can ensure attendance is not a barrier to your child’s progress.

Finally, just a number of reminders re procedures for attendance at Spalding Parish. Please remember if your child is unwell and unable to attend school, you should inform school by 9.30am that day in line with our school procedures. Please contact school on each day of absence unless otherwise agreed.

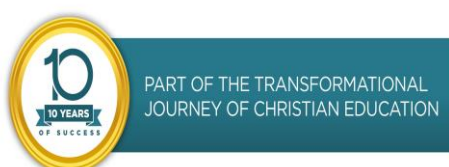
Also please remember that routine dental and medical appointments should not be made during school time. It is preferable and much more beneficial for pupils if appointments can be made either at the end of the school day or during school holidays. If you do have to make an appointment for during the school day, and we do appreciate that there are times when this may be necessary, please bring the appointment letter to the school office. Without this letter the absence will not be authorised.

We also continue to see an increase in leave of absence requests. Current Government regulations mean that absence from school can only be authorised for “exceptional circumstances” for which there is very clear established criteria, again set by the Government. It is therefore highly unlikely that time off school will be authorised during term time. Requests for term time absence, for any reason, must be made at least 10 days before the absence, except in emergencies, by booking an appointment with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Should an appointment not be made, and in line with our safeguarding procedures and Government regulations, we will contact you with regards to your child’s absence in order to clarify fully the reasons for absence. Should the absence be unauthorised this may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. This may also be the case with regards to the increasing absences that we are seeing at the beginning and end of terms.

Thank you in anticipation of your continued support. As always if you do have any questions or queries in relation to attendance please do not hesitate to get in touch via feedback@spaldingparish.laat.co.uk or via the school office.

Kind Regards,
Diane Mulley
Head Teacher



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