



# Spalding Parish Church of England Day School

*Wholly inclusive, striving for fulfilment, empowering the flourishing of our world*

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

## ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

### Medical Appointments

While we encourage scheduling medical appointments outside of school hours, we understand that it's not always feasible. If your child must have an appointment during the school day, please take only the essential time away from school to minimise disruptions to your child's education. Additionally, we ask that you provide the school with a copy or screen shot of the appointment confirmation so that we can document it in the child's file and authorise the absence.

### Exceptional Circumstances

We would like to remind all families of the legal framework surrounding term-time holidays and the issuing of penalty notices for unauthorised absences, in conjunction with advice from the Local Authority.

Please be aware that **there is no right of appeal** against a penalty notice once it has been issued. The decision to authorise or unauthorise an absence rests solely with the Academy/School. It is important to remember you should discuss any concerns you have with us **before** a leave of absence is considered.

We understand that some employers may restrict when holidays can be taken, and that travel costs can vary significantly throughout the year. However, **neither of these factors constitutes an exceptional circumstance**, according to guidance from the Department for Education, **Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)** and **Resources for families | Children's Commissioner for England** and therefore cannot be considered as a valid reason for authorising term-time leave.

### Penalty Notices and Prosecution

It is important to be aware that poor attendance may result in the issuing of penalty notices to parents. These notices can apply to term-time holidays, any unauthorised absences/persistent absence or a combination.

The national threshold for issuing a penalty notice in England is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10-week period. This typically equates to 5 school days. (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).



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A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- **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 Penalty.**

**Please note:** A Fixed Penalty Notice can also be issued if your child is seen in a public place within the first 5 days of an exclusion from their school.

- **Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it a duty for parents in relation to pupils subject to a fixed period or permanent exclusion to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of any such exclusion. If a child is present in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion during school hours the parent may be guilty of an offence for which they can be prosecuted by the LA before a magistrates' court or issued with a Penalty Notice.**

See below for further information:

Penalty Notice	Details
<b>First Notice in a 3 year period:</b>	Issued to each parent. Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days £160 if paid within 28 days.
<b>Second Notice in a 3 year period:</b>	Issued to each parent. Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
<b>Third Notice in a 3 year period:</b>	Alternative action should be taken, for example prosecution or other attendance legal interventions. Fines per parent are capped at two within any three-year period. If a parent is prosecuted for their child's non-attendance, they could face a magistrates court appearance and a fine of up to £2,500 and/or prison.

*It is important to note that fines are a last resort, and parents are offered support from the school on many occasions to improve their child's attendance first. With this in mind, we would also ask that parents and carers are honest with school about the reasons for absence. We do have a duty of care and a safeguarding responsibility to follow up on reasons for absence and are aware of instances where reasons for absence have been inaccurate. Instances such as this can also result in penalty notices and as such our preference would be that you liaise with the school re reasons for absence so this can be avoided.*

Thank you for your continued support. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in ensuring that your child's attendance and education remains a priority.

Yours sincerely

Diane Mulley  
Interim Executive Head Teacher

Emily Hill  
Interim Head of School



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