



August 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Attendance Procedures and Formal Fixed Penalty Warning

Please note that this letter is being sent to ALL families with children in Year 7 to Year 11.

Following Government guidance, it contains important information following the extraordinary COVID-19 circumstances faced in 2019-2020.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming back all our students following last academic year's unprecedented school closure due to COVID-19. We understand that this may cause some concern but as stated in Mrs Conley's regular weekly updates, the Trust has worked very hard to ensure the safety and well-being of every student and staff member.

At the date of writing this letter, the Government has issued guidelines to state that every child must return to school in September 2020, with education being compulsory for all students and that the rules in place prior to the lockdown, will be reinstated.

This means:

- A student with attendance below 90% is classed as a persistent absentee, regardless of whether the school has authorised or unauthorised the absence and irrespective of the reason for any absence.
- Spalding Academy's expectation for attendance is 96% or above and this will be continuously monitored during the academic year.
- Students with an attendance of less than 90% will be asked to attend an Attendance Panel and assurances will need to be made that the student's attendance will improve.
- No medical appointments will be authorised without evidence (i.e. doctor slip / prescription labels / hospital appointment letters / appointment texts / texts from medical practices seen by school staff).
- We are aware that some appointments are made on an emergency basis and will retrospectively amend records once the slips / labels have been received.
- The Trust will not authorise a leave of absence in term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance.
- Any leave of absence not applied for within 14 days of the date of the absence will automatically be unauthorised, no matter the reason.

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Attendance at Spalding Academy is constantly monitored to make sure that students achieve their best possible results during their time with us. Poor attendance not only affects a student's grades but also their social interaction with their peers. As such, good attendance is rewarded routinely throughout the year.

Can I please draw your attention to our 'late to school' strategy?

Students should not be late to school without a valid reason eg medical appointments.
School gates now close at 8.35am encouraging students to be in school and ready to learn from 8.40am at the latest.

A student late to school will be given a 15-minute detention at the end of that school day (under school policy this does not require prior notice to parents).

Any student late twice in one week will be given a one-hour detention that Friday.

Legislation:

If a student fails to return to school 10 days following the expected date of return after a leave of absence, the school is entitled to remove that child from the school roll.

The school will apply for Fixed Penalty Notices for persistent poor attendance (below 90%) or holidays taken during term time. A Fixed Penalty Notice is 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 student 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;
- Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it a duty for parents in relation to student's 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 Local Authority before a magistrate's court or issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for £60.00 or £120.00.

The school's Attendance Policy is available via our website www.spaldingacademy.org.uk. The Lincolnshire County Council 'Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct' can be viewed on their website:

<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/welfare>

Yours faithfully



Mr B Sinclair
Executive Deputy Headteacher