



## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Review Date:	March 2008	Last review date:	TBD
Policy Adopted:	August 2007	Next review date:	TBD

**This Policy incorporates the Academy's vision and core values.**

### Introduction

Spires Academy recognises that students will only achieve their potential if they are present in the Academy, every day and on time. Good attendance is vital for good learning and should be encouraged and rewarded. This policy statement will be continually developed in consultation with parents, students and governors, to reflect that the Academy plays a supportive and complementary role to that of parents in getting students to the Academy.

### Purpose

The aim of this policy is to:

- create an environment in which students wish to attend the Academy and look forward to lessons
- devise strategies to eliminate both whole day truancy and lesson avoidance to a minimum
- maintain accurate attendance data with all absences accounted for
- report any latenesses and absences regularly to parents
- identify and remove any barriers to attendance or punctuality for individual students or groups of students
- meet statutory requirements as set out in DfES circular 10/99 appendix A and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

### Definitions:

Every half-day absence from the Academy must be classified as authorised or unauthorised.

### ***Unauthorised Absence***

Unauthorised absences are those which the Academy does not consider 'reasonable' and for which no 'leave of absence' has been given. These include (but are not intended to be exhaustive):

- parents keeping students away from the Academy for example because they are unhappy, or to look after younger siblings
- truancy before or during the Academy day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- students who arrive at the Academy too late to get a mark (after 9.30am)
- transport difficulties
- birthday treat
- medical appointments which could be booked in the Academy holidays or at the end of the day
- shopping trips



## **Authorised Absence**

The Academy will authorise absences in the following cases:

- where a parent telephones the Academy by 9.20am on the first day of absence and confirms the length of absence with a written or electronic message with a reason acceptable to the Academy
- where a parent has failed to contact the Academy on the first day of absence, but has offered a satisfactory explanation and confirmation of the length of absence with a written or electronic message acceptable to the Academy
- when a parent has made a request in advance for absence which is deemed reasonable by the Academy. Requests for holidays in exceptional circumstances (and for a maximum of up to 10 Academy days only) will be reviewed individually
- where any of the reasons cited in DfES circular 10/99 apply.

All absences are unauthorised until the Academy has given approval for one of the reasons mentioned above. In order to develop appropriate responses, the Academy will differentiate between different kinds of unauthorised absence.

### **Lateness**

Lateness is unsatisfactory conduct and may, if not discouraged, lead to absenteeism.

The Academy begins at 8.40a.m. and all students are expected to be in the Academy for registration at this time. Any child arriving late should enter the Academy via the main entrance reporting to reception to sign in. If accompanied, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register. The child will then be sent to their lessons. Late arrivals are logged and any student with two or more in any one week will receive a 1 hour detention. If persistent lateness continues then further action will be taken such as Fixed Penalty Notices.

Penalty Notices are issued for unauthorised absence from the Academy of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a current term.

The following circumstances will be considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing of Penalty Notices:

- truancy, including truancy sweeps
- parentally-condoned absences
- unauthorised holidays in term time
- persistent lateness after the register has closed
- excessive delayed return from extended holidays

On receipt of the Notice the penalty will be £50.00 if paid within 28 days, rising to £100.00 if not paid after 28 days but within 42 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 42 day period may result in prosecution (by Kent LA.).

Fixed penalty notices will be issued by the Attendance and Behaviour Service based on requests from the Academy's Education Welfare Officer.

### **The Management of Attendance**

- The day to day oversight and monitoring of attendance will be the responsibility of the Attendance Officer. A weekly report on attendance and punctuality, measured against targets will be prepared for the Head of School and a half-termly report prepared for the Governing Body.
- Any morning absences will be followed by First Day Calling by the Attendance Officer. This is nationally recognised as good practice.
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- We endorse a whole Academy approach to the promotion of good attendance and all staff will:
  1. Make it clear to students that punctuality and good attendance is essential, acting as a good role model in their own behaviour.
  2. Ensure that lessons are interesting and stimulating for the students so that they will wish to take part and attend.
  3. Take care over all registrations, for lessons as well as at the statutory times, actively and frequently reinforcing the message that students are welcomed in class.
  4. Follow up all absentees and reasons for absence.
  5. Encourage students to move purposefully around the Academy site so as to arrive at lessons on time.
  6. Set attendance and punctuality targets as part of Academic Review Days and in formal reports.
  7. Give sympathetic welcome and support to students returning from a period of absence.
  8. Create a system of rewards for punctuality and attendance.
  9. Be ready to talk to students about difficulties they are having in the Academy and any problems they may have with attendance. Offer advice as appropriate.

### **Procedures**

If a student is reluctant to attend, the problem will be addressed jointly by the Academy, parents and student. An individual Support Plan will be put together with the Deputy Head of School – Inclusion, the appropriate Deputy Head of School and Student Support Manager in charge of the mini-school, the tutor, the SENCo, parents and any external support services as necessary.

### **Education Welfare Officer**

The Education Welfare Officer is invited to the Academy once a week. Students will be referred to the EWO. if they have continuous absence without authorisation for ten or more Academy days or attendance has fallen below 80%. The Education Welfare Officer will be asked to administer fixed penalty notices and fast-track referrals for issuing of an F1 letter.

### **Non-Attenders**

In the case of a student who finds Academy attendance a problem, the Academy will:

- establish close links with parents.
- develop a partnership between the Academy, the EWO., the student, parents and other agencies in the planning and implementation of programmes to improve attendance
- be as flexible as possible in making arrangements for meeting academic needs in consultation with appropriate agencies
- letters will be sent to parents of students whose absence is below 90% in order to signal that these students are a cause for concern
- once a student has become a cause for concern, his or her attendance will be monitored and parents will be invited in to an attendance panel to discuss their child and ways in which their attendance can be improved. Rewards will be used once the student's attendance has risen to meet their target.