

# Sprowston Cluster of Schools

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Cecil Gowing Infant  
Falcon Junior  
Garrick Green Infant  
Hainford and Frettenham Primary  
Partnership  
Hall School  
Lodge Lane Infant  
Old Catton Junior  
Sparhawk Infant and Nursery  
Spixworth Infant  
Sprowston Community High  
Sprowston Infant  
Sprowston Junior  
White Woman Lane Junior

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## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by Cluster Governors and the Governing  
Body of Falcon Junior School

November 2014  
Reviewed November 2015  
Review date: November 2016

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## **Aims**

The Sprowston Cluster of Schools is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavor to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education

Each year schools in the Sprowston Cluster will set individual attendance/absence targets for their school.

Each school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it an explanation of the procedures that this school will use to meet its attendance targets.

## **Promoting attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

The Home/School agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them.

## **Leave of absence in term time**

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The school will consider any application for leave of absence and will only agree to authorize the absence in exceptional circumstances; parents must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence.

## **School Procedures**

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education.

## Understanding Types of Absence

**Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.**

1. Authorised Absence
2. Unauthorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

### 1. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996. Eg) Illness or medical appointments which unavoidably fall in school time. We ask parents/carers to try to book dentist/doctor appointments after 1.45pm so pupils can receive their attendance marks for the day.

### 2. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

These include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips or holidays in term time

Whilst any child maybe off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

### 3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

**Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits

- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

If a pupil is receiving education off site or is attending at a school where they are dual registered, the school will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

### **Holidays in Term Time**

- From July 2013 the law states that holidays can no longer be authorized except in exceptional circumstances.
- Any parent/carer requesting time out of school needs to discuss with the headteacher or designated attendance lead to clarify the reason.
- Absences other than illness can be marked as “Special circumstances” if they meet the criteria agreed by the Sprowston Cluster of schools.
- The Sprowston Cluster of Schools follows guidelines and takes advice from our attendance officer.
- We have issued letters in July 2013 and December 2013 to inform parents and carers of the new process for absence.

Each school within the Sprowston Cluster of Schools will maintain individual discretion but agree that exceptional circumstances may include:

- Armed forces personnel returning from a tour of duty
- Police or other service personnel whose leave has been cancelled during school holidays (for example during the Olympic Games last year)
- Family funeral

The Local Authority has introduced a system where any pupil who has an attendance of 85% or less with at least 15% unauthorised absence over a 6 week period, or 10 consecutive sessions (i.e. 5 school days) unauthorised absence, will meet the criteria for legal intervention which could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

From 7<sup>th</sup> January 2014, any pupil who meets either criterion will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 *per parent per child* which must be paid in one payment in 21 days

## The Registration System

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## Absence Procedures at Falcon Junior School

### **Registers**

At Falcon Junior School we open the doors at 8.40am. The school day starts at 8.50am and we expect your child to be on the premises at this time. Registers are marked by 9.05am and your child will be marked late if they are not in by this time.

### **Lateness**

At 9.20am the registers will be closed. Any pupil arriving after this time will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

This could mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.15pm.  
The registers will close at 1.30pm.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at anytime if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late before registers close.

### **First Day Absence**

#### **If a child is absent parents must:**

- Contact us before 9.30a.m. on the first day, and, if appropriate, each subsequent day, of absence and leave a message on the answer phone.
- Or, call into school and report to the office,

#### **If a child is absent we will:**

- Telephone parents on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- We may contact other emergency contacts for a pupil if we cannot contact parents/carers.

## **Continuing Absence**

- Invite parents in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 85%.

## **Ten Day's Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Staff for the local area. [*This is a legal requirement*]. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

## **Absence notes**

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

## **Frequent Absence**

Within the school it is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible.

At Falcon Junior School we work in partnership with parents/carers to enable all pupils to have the best attendance possible.

We rigorously monitor the attendance of every pupil and we;

- make early contact with families if we have concerns about a pupil's attendance
- take advice from our attendance officer
- liaise with feeder schools and Sprowston Community High School
- can involve our Parent Support Adviser
- can set up a Family Support Process
- use the fast track attendance system when necessary

## **Persistent Absence [PA]**

All pupils whose attendance level falls below 90% maybe subject to an action plan (when appropriate) to support their return to full attendance. These action plans will be set up by the headteacher.

The action plan will include engagement with all parties who can support the pupil's attendance and include the systems as detailed above. PA is currently 85% therefore intervention should be happening before attendance falls to this level.

## **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

## **Record preservation**

We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years.

Computer registers will be printed out at least once a month and preserved as electronic back-ups and will be available for each month.

## **Register Security**

Registers or attendance marking sheets if used must be safely stored. Registers are located in the school office when not being used during morning and afternoon registration periods.

## **Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work. The school will make use of the attendance data available on the "RAISEONLINE" system, when setting its target. Targets will relate to national averages.

## **Absence Rates and Targets.**

For 2014 we set our absence rate to 4% or below (= 96% attendance.)

At the end of July 2014 we achieved 95.8%.

For 2015 we set our absence rate to 4% or below (= 96% attendance)

At the end of July 2014 we achieved 95.9%.

## **PA rates and Targets**

For 2014 we achieved 2.6% PA.

For 2015 we achieved 2.3 % PA.

For 2015/2016 we set our PA target to <2.3%



## Appendices

### 1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

#### **Register and Admission Roll keeping.**

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

#### **Attendance Targets**

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education (School Attendance Targets)(England) Regulations 2007

#### **Guidance documents on attendance.**

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website.



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**Appendix September 2015**

**Approved by Cluster Governors and the Governing  
Body of Falcon Junior School.**

**November 2015**

**Review date: November 2016**

- In order to support schools with the collection of information to send to the court officer. Sprowston Cluster Schools may now request medical evidence if a pupil is absent from school for 10 consecutive sessions.
- All absences will be followed up and if no contact is made with parents or carers the school may need to inform the Local Authority.