



SPENCER

ACADEMIES TRUST

Attendance Policy

September 2022

The Local Governing Body of John Port Spencer Academy were informed of this policy on September 15th 2022.

It will be reviewed should statutory guidance require changes.

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1. Aims

Spencer Academies Trust (SAT) and John Port Spencer Academy are committed to fulfilling our obligation to school attendance through our whole-academy culture and ethos that values and understands the importance of good attendance – high achievement depends on good attendance. This includes:

- promoting good attendance;
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- acting early to address patterns of absence and;
- building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend the academy.

Further to attendance to the academy we will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Whilst we will apply our policy fairly and consistently, we will also ensure that we consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(2022\)](#) published by the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures \(2015\)](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 SAT and Local Governing Body

SAT, through the Director of Inclusion and Engagement and by delegation, the Local Governing Body, is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of attendance across the academy's policies and ethos;
- making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data;
- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school;
- making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance and;
- holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

The Director of Inclusion and Engagement is Sarah McAneny. Our link governor for attendance is Emma Twigg (Safeguarding link governor).

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- the implementation of this policy at the academy;
- monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to governors;
- supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils;
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies and;
- issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

3.3 The Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The Senior Leader for Attendance is responsible for:

- leading attendance across the academy;
- offering a clear vision for attendance improvement;
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes;
- having an oversight of data analysis;
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;
- arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues and;
- delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The Senior Leader responsible for attendance at John Port Spencer Academy is Lee Shepherd. They can be contacted via ls@johnport.derbyshire.sch.uk or on 01283 734111 ext 1219.

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The academy Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7);
- benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the Principal;
- working with academy partners, the Local Authority and Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence and;
- advising the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

John Port Spencer Academy Attendance Officers are Alison Allen and Cheryl Walsh and can be contacted via aal@johnport.derbyshire.sch.uk/01283 734111 ext 1201, or cwa@johnport.derbyshire.sch.uk/01283 734111 ext 1408

3.5 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office through SIMS (the academy information system). This must be done on the same day and at 8.40-9.15am during registration and at the beginning of each lesson throughout the day.

3.6 Academy attendance officers/administration/Office Staff

Academy attendance officers/admin/office staff will:

- take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system (SIMS);
- transfer calls from parents to the teacher/Head of Year/Pastoral Lead/other in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- make sure their child attends every day and on time;
- call the academy to report their child's absence before 8.40am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return;
- provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child and;
- ensure children are collected on time at the end of the academy day at 3pm;
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the academy day.

All absences can be reported using the academy absence line on 01283 735181 or attendance@johnportspencer.com.

3.8 Pupils

All John Port Spencer Academy pupils are expected to:

- Attend every school day and lesson on time.

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each academy day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- present;
- attending an approved off-site educational activity;
- absent, or;
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- the original entry;
- the amended entry;
- the reason for the amendment;

- the date on which the amendment was made and;
- the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

(See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.)

We will also record:

- whether the absence is authorised or not;
- the nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity, or;
- the nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive into the academy by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9am (not longer than 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place). The register for the second session will be taken at 12.25pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm (please note that due to staggered lunchtimes this will only be open for 15 minutes for any one year group as some year groups start period 4 at 12.25pm, with other starting at 12.45pm).

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.40am or as soon as practically possible by calling the academy office staff (see also section 7).

To report an absence (in Years 7 – 11), please email attendance@johnportspencer.com by 8:40am stating your child's name, form group and reason for absence. If your child is ill, please provide a brief description of their symptoms. *Email is our preferred way of receiving absence notifications as this removes the need for parents to write a note to their child's form tutor on their return.* Alternatively, please telephone the absence line on 01283 735181. Please report this on a daily basis unless the length of the absence is known. Any child with diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms must remain at home until they feel well and have been free of symptoms for 48 hours (the '48 hour rule').

For all Sixth Form related absences, please email the Sixth Form team at sixthform@johnportspencer.com.

For medical appointment notifications, please email the details of the appointment to attendance@johnportspencer.com and attach a copy of the appointment card, letter or text message. Please include your child's name and form group in the email.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or there are concerns about persistent absence, the academy may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

For all planned absences please complete a Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances form which is on the academy website. We are particularly requesting email notification because we are able to save details electronically and reduce paper recording. All information will be forwarded to your child's Form Tutor and Year Team, eliminating the need for you to duplicate your message. If you are unable to provide email notification for your child's absence, then please contact the academy absence team using the absence line telephone number **01283 735181**.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of academy hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of the academy for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- **Before the register has closed** will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- **After the register has closed** will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Lateness is monitored during registration and for every lesson. Lateness and attendance are monitored very closely at the start of the day in registration.

All student must arrive to the academy prior to 8.40am when the academy gates close. If students arrive after this time they will need to sign in at student reception where their lateness is recorded, which also allows lateness to be monitored carefully and acted upon.

If a student fails to attend registration and then also fails to register in period 1 then a message is sent home to notify parents that their child is absent. Late arrival after period 1 without a valid reason will be recorded as truancy. We also expect students to be punctual for every lesson. If a student turns up to a lesson more than 5 minutes late or after the majority of the class turn up, then they will be recorded as late. Lateness to lesson is also monitored carefully and acted upon.

Heads of Year/Pastoral Mangers will monitor punctuality. If students are frequently late then appropriate sanctions will be implemented. The 'Inventory programme' will be used to monitor punctuality to the academy. If a student is late to the academy more than once in any given week parents are contacted by the attendance welfare officer in student reception and this information is passed on to their Head of Year/Pastoral Manager. Students also receive a detention if they are late more than once in any given week.

4.5 Following-up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend the academy does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit and/or contact the police and/or social care depending on the individual circumstances of the child;
- identify whether the absence is approved or not;
- identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session and;
- contact the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer.

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The academy will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through the individual student progress reports that are published at least twice each year.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-time Absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances that could not be reasonably foreseen and for which there was insufficient time to take the necessary action to resolve the situation arising from those circumstances.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the academy website or by collecting a hard copy of the form from reception at John Port Spencer Academy. The Principal may require evidence to support **any** request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where a day is “exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong” (The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c)). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

When considering granting the leave of absence as exceptional circumstance the Principal will consider:

- the amount of time requested;
- circumstances of the request;
- frequency of the request;
- previous leave of absences taken within child's academy career;
- when the request was made;
- proximity of external and internal examinations;
- the child's current attendance record, including previous academic years;
- the impact that absence will have on a child's attendance record;
- the impact on the child's education and their ability to catch up on the work that would be missed.

5.2 Legal Sanctions

John Port Spencer Academy or the Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from the academy, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made **directly to the Local Authority**.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Principal, Local Authority officer or the police.

- The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
- the number of unauthorised absences occurring within a **rolling** academic year;
- one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission, and;
- where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during academy hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

John Port Spencer Academy recognises that rewards play a vital part in encouraging pupils to achieve. Rewards will be given to pupils for excellent attendance and punctuality. The following illustrates the rewards and strategies that will be given for good attendance and punctuality (these can be subject to change).

- Celebrating good attendance in assemblies
- 100% attendance certificates each term
- Attendance competitions in each year
- Reward vouchers
- Reward events

7. Attendance Monitoring

Where there are any attendance issues, the Attendance Team (which is made up of two Attendance Welfare Officers [AWO] and an Attendance Officer [AO] for Sixth Form) will contact parents to discuss/resolve these.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

John Port Spencer Academy will:

- monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the academy and at an individual pupil level and;
- identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The academy will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Local Governing Body with the support of the Director of Inclusion and Engagement.

7.2 Analysing attendance

John Port Spencer Academy will:

- analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families, and;
- look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

John Port Spencer Academy will:

- provide regular attendance reports to teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families and;
- use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

7.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

John Port Spencer Academy will:

use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence;
hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement and;
provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

If a student's absence falls below 96%, the Attendance Team will talk to the student and endeavour to contact the parent/guardian to see how we can help encourage regular, consistent attendance - crucial to the child's learning.

If a student's attendance drops below 90% (Persistent Absentee), the student, parent/guardian will be invited into the academy to meet with a member of the Attendance Team to discuss matters in more detail and any further action that may be required. These meetings are part of the Improving Attendance Programme (IAP). This meeting may also include the Head of Year (HOY)/Pastoral Manager (PM) and in some cases the Assistant Vice Principal responsible for Attendance. If appropriate, outside agencies may also be asked to attend. In cases of continual, persistent absence [or absence with no cooperation], legal proceedings may begin.

Improving Attendance Programme (IAP)

The Improving Attendance Programme is a 'plan of action' designed to closely monitor a student's attendance to support that student in making the necessary changes in order to improve their attendance. It will always involve a member of the Attendance Team and student, but will often involve the parents for greater effectiveness.

If the IAP fails to have an impact it will also involve the Head of Year/Pastoral Manager and then the Assistant Vice Principal in charge of attendance. In these meetings, short-term targets are set and monitored closely. Positive phone calls home and praise are both central to maintaining positive improvements in attendance in this programme.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually.

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's Guidance on School Attendance 2022.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the academy
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the academy
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the academy
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances at the Principal's discretion
I	Illness	The academy has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness (not medical appointments)
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the academy
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the academy
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	The academy is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence or no reason has been provided
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at the academy after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Academy site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the academy
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial academy closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day/academy used for polling