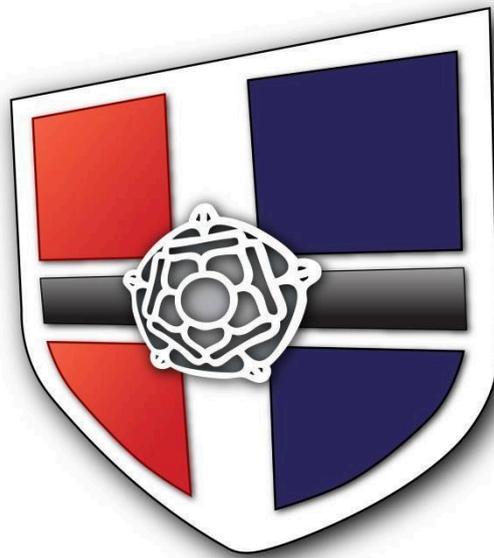


# ***Sponne School***



## **Attendance Policy**

***September 2023***



## Sponne School Attendance Policy

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Sponne School students are expected to attend school regularly and on time and this policy aims to make clear the importance of maximum attendance at school to enable students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities. This is every child's fundamental right and every effort will be made to help students engage in their education in a positive and rewarding way.

In order to achieve this aim, school and home need to work together so that:

- Students are committed to their education and understand the importance of good attendance
- Parents instil in their child the expectation to attend school daily and support school if it becomes necessary to monitor attendance as is their legal duty.
- School has clear lines of responsibility for dealing with attendance and are consistent in the implementation of the policy, including a wide range of positive intervention strategies if concerns continue and, very importantly, rewarding and celebrating good and improving attendance.
- We have a rigorous approach to the tracking of attendance and this is something students are involved in during bi-weekly attendance sessions within tutor time.

At Sponne we have outstanding attendance and we have outstanding exam results and it is important to recognise the link between the two. The vast majority of our students achieve over 96% attendance and this is what we expect from all students as a minimum.

On September 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 the Government brought in new regulations giving no entitlement to parents to take their child on a family holiday during term time and to do so could result in the Local Authority issuing a fixed penalty notice.

We want to take every care to maintain the positive relationship we have with parents and ensure that you feel able to communicate honestly with us without fear of being fined for an absence you feel is justified.

This will be our position:

- No request for holiday absence will be authorised. You may choose to take your child out of school but this will be recorded on your child's attendance record as unauthorised absence.
- If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions - 83.33%) over a period of six weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action. This risk increases if there are existing concerns relating to your child's attendance and intervention programmes have been in place. This could include:
  - A Penalty Notice payable up to £120 fine without further reference to you for a penalty notice. This warning is valid for 12 months.
  - Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1966, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.

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o Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1966, where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

- If your child's attendance rate falls below 96%, all absences will be monitored and attendance targets will be set for improvement.

Parents asking for consideration for absence where special circumstances apply will be informed by the Headteacher if this will be authorised.

**N.B.** Parents can be fined by West Northamptonshire Council (the Local Authority) for taking their child on holiday during term time without the consent of the school.

**A Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 could be issued to each parent for each child and so for a two parent family with two children this would equal a fine of £240.** (The fixed penalty notice fine for each parent / child is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt). Where Sponne School has to make a referral to West Northamptonshire Council about an unauthorised absence, parents will be informed by letter that this referral is being made. This excludes periods of authorised illness or absence authorised by the Head Teacher for special circumstances.

### Authorised Absences

Sponne School follows the Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance - May 2022 (and codes) detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- When a child is ill or receiving medical attention
- Days of religious observance with - evidence from religious body in advance
- Absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness)
- The school acknowledges that allowing students to take part in extra-curricular activities during the school year gives the opportunity to enhance their learning experiences. In these circumstances it is possible to grant absence of up to 10 school sessions in any academic year. Please note a school day is made-up of 2 sessions (morning and afternoon) therefore a maximum of 5 full days or a combination of full days and half days can be taken. In any circumstance attendance must be above 96%. We ask parents to notify the school with evidence from the approved body in advance - a minimum of four weeks' notice. Permission will always be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

There are other events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school and professional discretion will be used in these cases about whether the absence can be authorised.

All absences for illness should be reported through our absence reporting line. We expect absences to be kept to a minimum and routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible.

### Absences will be unauthorised if:

- No reason or acceptable explanation is provided by a parent within 5 working days.

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- The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

It is the school that judges whether an absence is authorised or not. A note or telephone call from home therefore does not automatically make an absence valid, justified or authorised.

### Home/School Partnership

Securing a high level of attendance requires the school and home to work closely together. We seek parents support to:

- (i) Do all they can to ensure their child arrives on time for morning and afternoon school. The first lesson begins at 8.45am and students should be on site for the first bell at 8.40am. Afternoon registration is at 1.45 pm. This is a parental duty and we expect the support of parents in encouraging this. Students failing to arrive on time will be sanctioned (see Behaviour policy for further details).
  - The close of the AM register is 09:45 and any students arriving to school after this will be given unauthorised marks for the AM session (*please see 'Authorised Absences' for times when this wouldn't be applied*).
- (ii) Notify the school of their child's absence by using the dedicated absence reporting line (01327 350284 Ext 7126) or absence email (absence@sponne.org.uk).
- (iii) Keep school informed on a daily basis where absence extends to two days or more again by use of the absence reporting line or absence email.
- (iv) Get in touch at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attitude to school. Failing to attend school can be indicative of underlying stresses or concerns and it is important to try to resolve these before a pattern of poor attendance develops. Please contact your child's Progress Learning Leader in the first instance.

### In return the school will:

- (v) Make daily contact with a parent where a reason for their child's absence has not been provided. This will be by way of an automated text service which requires the parent to respond to the message received, by phone call, text and/or email..
- (vi) Contact home regarding any outstanding unexplained absences if point (v) has not been followed.
- (vii) Follow up promptly any concerns that parents' pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of well-being in school.
- (viii) Involve the School Support Services, including the Parent Support Advisor, to help students re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances.
- (ix) Regularly and consistently remind students of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- (x) Reward good or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.

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- (xi) Work with parents to identify other agencies who may be able to support the child and family. This may involve implementing an Early Help Assessment.

The following documents give more operational information:

- Roles and responsibilities of staff are outlined in Appendix 1;
- The Essential Contact List can be found in Appendix 2;
- Our **School Attendance leaflet** (issued to all parents electronically in Term 1 of each academic year and to all new students as they join the school during an academic year), is clear about the school's attendance expectations for its students.

### The SASS - School Attendance Support Service

Sponne School is supported by the SASS part of West Northamptonshire Council. The school works with the SASS where students' attendance or welfare is giving cause for concern.

Individual cases may result in legal action if parents fail to fulfil their responsibility of getting their child to school.

Before a case goes to court, Parenting Contracts will be drawn up setting targets for attendance levels; SASS may wish to discuss the situation further at this point before a Penalty Notice is issued. Prior to this action the school will arrange meetings with the PLL, parents and students to support improvement as the prime aim of all action is to get the child attending school on a regular basis.

### Rewards for Good Attendance

To promote good attendance and to emphasise its importance, the school emails 100%/98%/96% attendance certificates termly.

The reward programme automatically issues credits for these levels of attendance and good and outstanding attendance is celebrated in:

- Achievement assemblies in each term (£50 voucher prize draw for all with 96% or above attendance)
- 10 sparks are rewarded for good attendance following each bi-weekly tutorial session (100% over the 2 week period)

Summaries are included in every progress report sent to parents each term and can be viewed online on Go4Schools.

Reviewed by:	Jamie Hollamby	
Agreed by:	Sponne Local Governing Body	Date: Nov 2023
To be reviewed:	Nov 2025	



**Appendix 2**

**Essential Contacts (2023-2024)**

To report absence: 01327 350284 ext 7126 or email [absence@sponne.org.uk](mailto:absence@sponne.org.uk)

The Associate Assistant Headteacher with overall responsibility for attendance is  
Mr Jamie Hollamby

<b>Progress Learning Leader</b>	<b>Senior Link for Year Group</b>
<b>Yr 7:</b> Mr Trusler  01327 350284 ext 7264 <a href="mailto:strusler@sponne.org.uk">strusler@sponne.org.uk</a>	Mrs Cutler (Assistant Headteacher)  01327 350284 ext 7111 <a href="mailto:ccutler@sponne.org.uk">ccutler@sponne.org.uk</a>
<b>Yr 8:</b> Ms Turton  01327 350284 ext 7507 <a href="mailto:hturton@sponne.org.uk">hturton@sponne.org.uk</a>	Mrs Chapman (Assistant Headteacher)  01327 350284 ext 7500 <a href="mailto:rchapman@sponne.org.uk">rchapman@sponne.org.uk</a>
<b>Yr 9:</b> Mrs Fox  01327 350284 ext 7370 <a href="mailto:cfox@sponne.org.uk">cfox@sponne.org.uk</a>	Mr Hollamby (Associate Assistant Headteacher)  01327 350284 ext 7310/7264 <a href="mailto:jhollamby@sponne.org.uk">jhollamby@sponne.org.uk</a>
<b>Yr 10:</b> Mr Deboo  01327 350284 ext 7235 <a href="mailto:pdeboo@sponne.org.uk">pdeboo@sponne.org.uk</a>	Mrs Notley (Assistant Headteacher)  01327 350284 ext 7506 <a href="mailto:knotley@sponne.org.uk">knotley@sponne.org.uk</a>
<b>Yr 11:</b> Kate Jaycock  01327 350284 ext 7117 <a href="mailto:kjaycock@sponne.org.uk">kjaycock@sponne.org.uk</a>	Ms Bhakta (Assistant Headteacher)  01327 350284 ext 7212 <a href="mailto:lbhakta@sponne.org.uk">lbhakta@sponne.org.uk</a>
<b>Sixth Form:</b> Mrs Mort  01327 350284 ext 7502 <a href="mailto:hmort@sponne.org.uk">hmort@sponne.org.uk</a>	Mrs Underwood (Deputy Head)  01327 350284 ext 7210 <a href="mailto:cunderwood@sponne.org.uk">cunderwood@sponne.org.uk</a>
<b>Parent Support Adviser:</b>	Mrs Lopes 01327 350284 ext 7237 <a href="mailto:alopes@sponne.org.uk">alopes@sponne.org.uk</a>

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### **Addendum for Attendance Policy until 31/08/2024**

#### **Department for Education guidance used:**

- [Working together to improve school attendance \(May 2022\)](#)
- [Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs \(December 2023\)](#)
- [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions \(December 2015\)](#)
- [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance \(February 2023\)](#)
- [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance - effective practice examples \(February 2023\)](#)
- [Children missing education - statutory guidance for local authorities \(September 2016\)](#)

We may need to contact the Police or other agencies if there is no response to texts, phone calls, emails or home visits if we have concerns for the welfare of a pupil.

#### **Role and responsibilities - Form Tutor, PLL, Attendance Lead and Student Services**

#### **Roles and responsibilities:**

##### **Role of the Form Tutor - Broken weeks**

- Provide students with their PM attendance mark.
- Bi-weekly attendance monitoring.
- Go4Schools attendance tracker updated regularly.
- Offer praise and reward good attendance (10 sparks every 2 weeks of 100% attendance).
- Inform PLL of any students giving cause for concern.

##### **Role of the PLL (with support from SLT link as required)**

- Use bi-weekly attendance report on Go4Schools to highlight any concerns to form tutors.
- Discuss patterns of absence/individual student concerns with form tutors in half-termly team meetings and when required.
- Reinforce message in assemblies.
- Support with home visits in line with the 10 day absence protocol.
- Meet with the Attendance Team to target those students below 94% attendance and send out monitoring letters every 6 weeks.
- Hold meetings with parents and students, where attendance has been monitored and is below 90%. If necessary put Parenting Contracts in place
- Celebrate excellent attendance of 96% or above within celebration assemblies.
- Monitor and support their tutor team and tutor sessions



### **Role of Assistant Head (responsible for attendance)**

- To develop school attendance culture and vision.
- Liaise with the Attendance Team on bi-weekly attendance data.
- Identify trends and patterns.
- Provide attendance support and advice for staff.
- Liaise and support PLLs to discuss action plans and home contracts.
- Ensure systems are being monitored with Data Manager.
- Produce termly and annual reports for senior staff and Governors.
- Intervene in serious cases of poor attendance (liaise with Designated Safeguarding Lead throughout with those with safeguarding concerns).
- Liaise with the School Attendance Support Service (SASS) to try to gain the support required to help improve attendance.
- Monitor and support Progress Learning Leaders.

### **Student Services**

#### **Role of the Attendance Team**

- Receive all information regarding student absences.
- Record student lateness.
- Registers complete and accurate.
- Initiate 10 day absence protocol and consecutive days absence procedure
- Contacting parents/carers:
  - Automated text to determine reason for absence
  - Punctuality concerns
  - Truancy concern
  - Attendance monitoring letters (target group below 94%, sent by PLL, see below for summary of these)
  - Attendance information sharing with staff and parents - leaflet and letters.

Attendance monitoring letters (target group below 94%) sent by PLL:

- **Amber 1 letter:** Sent to parent/carer where a student's attendance fails to 94% or below to highlight the schools concern and request information/support from parent.
- **Amber 2 letter:** Sent to parent/carer if insufficient improvement in child's attendance as a result of them receiving Amber 1.
- **Red 1 letter:** Follow-up letter if 96% target not achieved during monitoring period (request medical evidence).
- **Red 2 letter:** Invitation to parent/child to attend Parenting Contract meeting with PLL.

Failure to improve after monitoring could result in a referral to the SASS and a Penalty Notice being issued. Low attendance at the end of the academic year will result in further monitoring at the start of the new academic year.



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### Role of the Governors

- Attendance data reported to governors via Headteacher report termly.
- Safeguarding governor with responsibility for attendance.