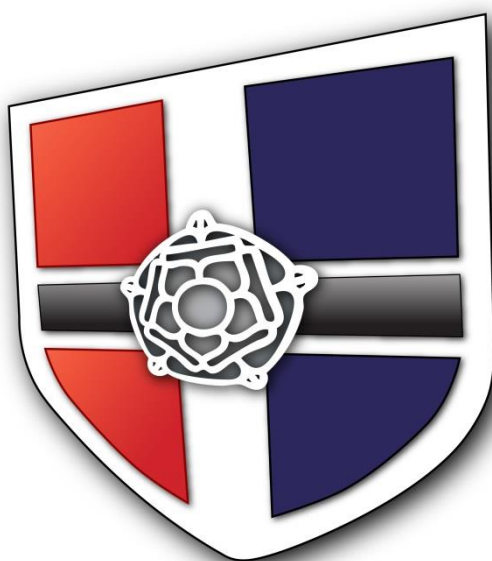


Sponne School



Attendance Policy

September 2020



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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.

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 1st 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 a period of 5 days (10 sessions) over a period of six weeks we are obliged to refer this to the LA and you will be at risk of incurring a Penalty Notice. This risk increases if there are existing concerns relating to your child's attendance and intervention programmes have been in place.
- 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 Head of School if this will be authorised.

N.B. Parents can be fined by Northamptonshire County 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 Northamptonshire County Council about an unauthorised absence, parents will be informed by letter that this referral is being made. This excludes periods of illness or absence authorised by the Head Teacher for special circumstances.

Authorised Absences

Sponne School follows the Department for Education (DfE) guidelines (and codes) detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- When a child is ill or receiving medical attention
- Days of religious observance notified 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 well in advance - a minimum of four weeks' notice. Permission will always be at the discretion of the Head of School.

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
- 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.

Covid-19 Attendance Guidelines

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term 2020-21, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19). For further details, please refer to the government guidance:

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- [Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year](#)

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 parents support in encouraging this. Students failing to arrive on time will be sanctioned. (see the Behaviour policy for further details)
- (ii) Notify the school of their child's absence by using the dedicated absence reporting line or absence email.
- (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 (Head of Year) 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
- (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.
- (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 4;



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- Our expectations are outlined in the school attendance booklet “School Attendance”, issued to all parents in Term 1 of each academic year and to all new students as they join the school during an academic year.
- Our **School Attendance booklet** (issued to all parents 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 Educational Inclusion and Partnerships (EIP)

Sponne School is supported by the Educational Inclusion and Partnerships (EIP) part of Northamptonshire County Council. The school works with the EIP 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; EIP 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 3 times a year. Rewards for attendance are incorporated the rewards system issuing electronic points to students. Summaries are included in every progress report sent to parents each term and can be viewed on line on Go4Schools.

Reviewed by:	KELLY NOTLEY	
Agreed by:	Sponne Local Governing Body	Date: Sep 2020
To be reviewed:	June 2022	



Appendix 1

Roles and responsibilities:

Role of the Form Tutor - Target Group – 94%-96%

- Mark registers in tutor time.
- Notify their tutor group of their % attendance/sessions missed from previous week.
- Praise and set informal verbal class target to encourage improvement.
- Inform PLL of any students giving cause for concern.
- Academic Mentoring to set clear achievable target.

Role of PLL (with support of SLT link as required)

- Use weekly attendance report to highlight any concerns to form tutors.
- Discuss patterns of absence/individual student concerns with form tutors.
- Reinforce message in assemblies.
- Meet with Attendance Team to target those students with 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.

Role of Assistant Head (responsible for attendance)

- Liaise with Attendance Team on weekly attendance data.
- Identify trends and patterns.
- Attendance support and advice for staff.
- Liaise and support PLLs to discuss action plans and home contacts.
- 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.



Student Services

Role of Attendance Team

- Receive all information regarding student absences
- Record student lateness
- Contacting parents:
 - Automated text to determine reasons for absence
 - Punctuality concerns
 - Truancy concern
 - Attendance monitoring letters (target group below 94%, sent by PLL, see below for summary of these)
 - Admin for Attendance Review Meetings (between Form Tutor and PLL)
- Attendance Information sharing with staff and parents

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

- Amber 1 letter: Sent to parent/s where a student's attendance falls to 94% or below to highlight the school's concern and request information/support from parent
- Amber 2 letter: Sent to parent/s if insufficient improvement in child's attendance as a result of their receiving Amber 1.
- Red 1 letter: Follow-up letter if 94% 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 EIP 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.

Access to Learning

Role of Parent Support Advisor in attendance

- At transition to liaise with primary schools and parents.
- To support students and parents to develop good attendance patterns.
- To work with parents where there are concerns that lead to poor attendance.
- To offer early intervention to parents regarding any concerns that can impact on a student's attendance and punctuality.

Role of House Intervention Team

- To intervene with students where there are punctuality concerns, including managing sanctions for lateness.
- Working alongside the PSA and PLLs to support students with intervention programmes in the House.



Appendix 2

Essential Contacts (2020-21)

To report absence: 01327 350284 ext. 126 or email absence@sponne.org.uk

The Assistant Headteacher with overall responsibility for attendance is Mrs Kelly Notley

Progress Learning Leader	Senior Link for Year Group
Yr 7: Mr DeBoo 013270350284 ext. 118 hmort@sponne.org.uk	Miss Harris (Assistant Headteacher) 01327 350284 ext. 500 lbhakta@sponne.org.uk
Yr 8: Mrs Mort 013270350284 ext. 505 hmort@sponne.org.uk	Mrs Bhakta (Assistant Headteacher) 01327 350284 ext. 212 lbhakta@sponne.org.uk
Yr 9: Mrs Kelly 01327 350284 ext 118 ckelly@sponne.org.uk	Mrs Cutler (Assistant Headteacher) 01327 350284 ext. 111 ccutler@sponne.org.uk
Yr 10: Mrs Turton 01327 350284 ext. 507 hturton@sponne.org.uk	Mrs Underwood (Deputy Headteacher) 01327 350284 ext. 210 eharris@sponne.org.uk
Yr 11: Mr Hollamby 01327 350284 ext. 503 jhollamby@sponne.org.uk	Mrs Notley (Assistant Headteacher) 01327 350284 ext. 506 knotley@sponne.org.uk
Sixth Form: Mrs Ramsden 01327 350284 ext. 260 hramsden@sponne.org.uk Asst PLL: Miss Whitmore 01327 350284 ext 502 kwhitmore@sponne.org.uk	Mr Hancock (Assistant Headteacher) 01327 350284 ext. 112 chancock@sponne.org.uk
Parent Support Adviser:	Mrs A L James 01327 350284 ext. 237 / 07857 332296 aljames@sponne.org.uk