



# Sprowston Community High School and Sixth Form

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Dear Parent/Carer

“the purpose of life is a life of purpose”

## Leave of Absence in Term Time

Sprowston Community High School is part of the Sprowston Cluster of Schools. The Cluster have a joint attendance policy approved in May 2017 which will be reviewed September 2019.

The Government has made changes to the Education regulations to the effect that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence in term time unless there are very clear exceptional circumstances. Any holidays taken in term time will have to be recorded as unauthorised absence. In addition the government has decided that parents or carers who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance must be subjected to a fine.

## Leave of Absence in Term Time –

Leave of absence in term time will be discouraged. Parents are reminded of the effect that absence can have on a student's potential achievement. The school will consider any application for leave of absence, but will only authorise in exceptional circumstances; parents **must** apply in advance for permission for their child to have a leave of absence. There is a form for this purpose available from reception and the school website.

## 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. Only the Head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise an absence. If there is no known reason for the absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised in the first instance.

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

## Understanding Types of Absence –

Any student on roll but absent from school must be recorded within one of these categories

- Authorised Absence
- Unauthorised Absence
- Approved Educational Activity

### 1. Authorised Absence

This is for students who are away from school for a reason deemed valid under Education Act 1996 e.g. illness or medical appointments which unavoidably fall in school time. We ask that parents and carers try to book doctor's and dentist's appointments after 1:45pm so that students can receive their attendance marks for the day.

## 2. Unauthorised Absence

This is for students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. These include:

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

## 3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off-site but with the approval of the school. Please note students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. These include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off-site

If a student is receiving education off site or is attending a school they are dual registered with, 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 authorised

- Any parent/carer requesting time out of school needs to discuss with the school's Attendance Support Officer to clarify the reason.
- Sprowston Community High School follows guidance from our designated Attendance Support and Enforcement Officer from Norfolk County Council.
- Records of absence are filed.
- Absences other than illness can be marked as 'C' – exceptional circumstances if they meet the agreed criteria. – Exceptional circumstances may include armed forces returning from a tour of duty, police or service personnel whose leave has been cancelled during school holidays or a family funeral.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have:

- 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time (for absences from 1 September 2017); or
- 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

The intervention could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Any student at Sprowston Community High School who meets either of the criteria 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 within 21 days. If unpaid, a further invoice for £60 per parent per child is issued; both individual invoices would then have to be paid making a total payment of £120 in 28 days. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.

In order to support schools with the collection of information to send to the court officer, Sprowston Community High School may now request medical evidence if a student is absent.

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