SPENCER
ACADEMIES TRUST

John Port Spencer Academy

Attendance Policy

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Contents

1. Aims 3
2. Legislation and Guidance 3
3. Roles and Responsibilities 3
4. Recording Attendance 5
5. Reporting to Parents/Carers 7
6. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence 8
7. Strategies for Promoting Attendance and Punctuality 9
8. Attendance Monitoring 10
9. Monitoring Arrangements 11
10. Links with Other Policies 11

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. We adopt a support-first approach to attendance seeking to understand and remove barriers to a pupil's attendance. Our approach includes:

- promoting high levels of attendance and punctuality;
- 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 at the academy, we will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Whilst we 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 ensuring reasonable adjustments are made and an individualised approach is taken where appropriate.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026 published by the Department for Education (DfE) and Keeping children safe in education 2026 (comes into force from 1 September 2026). 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
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2024
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance is everyone's responsibility. The following outlines key roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders.

3.1 SAT and Local Governing Body

SAT, through the Executive Director of Inclusion and Primary School Improvement, and by delegation, the Local Governing Body, is responsible for:

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

- holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Executive Director of Inclusion and Primary School Improvement is Sarah McAneny-Vincent. Our link governor for attendance is John Rimmer

3.2 The Principal (Miss Laura O'Leary)

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 Attendance Champion Responsible for Attendance (Mr Lee Shepherd – Vice Principal)

The Senior Attendance Champion for Attendance is responsible for embedding Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026) through:
• leading and championing attendance across the academy;
• offering a clear vision for attendance improvement;
• evaluating and monitoring expectations, progress and processes, including the efficacy of strategies and processes;
• having an oversight of data analysis;
• devising and implementing specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;
• arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues;
• delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families;
• establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff.

The Senior Attendance Champion responsible for attendance at John Port Spencer Academy is Lee Shepherd (Vice Principal). They can be contacted via lshepherd@johnportspencer.org.uk

3.4 The Attendance Officer (Miss Annabel Roberts)

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 8);
- benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Principal and sharing information with DSL where safeguarding concerns are emerging;
- working with academy partners and external agencies to tackle persistent absence and;
- advising the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The Attendance Officer responsible for attendance at John Port Spencer Academy is Annabel Roberts who can be contacted attendance@johnportspencer.org.uk

3.5 Teaching staff

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- welcoming all pupils to lessons;
- recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via Arbor. This must be done on the same day in the first 10 minutes of lessons.
- Registers must be updated in real time if a pupils arrives late with the appropriate code;
- attending training and CPD, as needed and appropriate;
- noticing absence trends for their pupils and informing the appropriate member of staff;
- discussing and promoting attendance with their pupils;
- remaining professionally curious around reasons for absence following safeguarding procedures if concerns emerge;
- working closely with identified students to promote improvement in attendance and punctuality;
- ensuring they are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents.

3.6 Academy Administration/Office Staff (Mrs Verena Beard)

Academy administration/office staff will:

- take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system (Arbor);
- transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer or Senior Attendance Champion in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance;
- inform the Class Teacher via adding an attendance note on Arbor that a child will be absent;
- conduct the daily duties of the Attendance Officer in their absence.

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;
- ensure children are collected on time at the end of the academy day at 3pm and;
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the academy day.
- Only request leave of absences in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance via academy processes (see Section 6.1)
- Engage positively with the academy to identify and support any identified barriers to attendance.

All absences can be reported using the academy absence line on 01283 735181.

3.8 Pupils

All John Port Spencer Academy pupils are expected to:

- attend school every day and arrive on time;
- be confident that any barriers to attendance can be shared with trusted adults in school.

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. The register is taken at the same time for all pupils. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.10am The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

It will mark whether every pupil is:

- present;
- attending an approved off-site educational activity;
- absent, or;
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances using coding which follows Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026

Using Arbor to amend the attendance register will ensure the following are included:

- 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.

We will also record:

- whether the absence is authorised or not;
- a detailed reason for any absence or lateness in the comment section alongside the correct code (See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.)

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

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 before 8.40am or as soon as reasonably practical by calling the academy office staff (see also section 7).

All absences can be reported using the academy absence line on 01283 735181.

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.

Planned medical or dental appointment absences can be reported by telephoning the academy on 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. See Section 6 for term-time absences the academy 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 (L).
- **After the register has closed** will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U).

Any child arriving after 8.40am will be marked as late 'code L' in the register. After 9.10am, any child arriving late with no reasonable explanation e.g. doctor's or dentist appointment with medical evidence from the establishment will be marked as unauthorised absence 'code U' in the register.

4.5 Following Up Unexplained Absence

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

- text 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 acadmey 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, amending all N codes within 5 working days after the session and;
- call 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 academy will consider involving external professionals.

Where any pupil who is considered vulnerable or 'at risk' for any reason, the following procedures will be followed:

- Seek to contact parent/carer on first day of absence;
- Inform the Senior Attendance Attendance Champion;
- Inform the DSL;
- Organise a home visit if absence persists;
- Involve external agencies where appropriate.

5. Reporting to Parents/Carers

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through the Parent Arbor app and through 2 progress checks each academic year

6. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

6.1 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. The form can be requested from the academy office. 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 academy 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.

6.2 Legal Sanctions

John Port Academy may refer to the Local Authority who can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from the Academy, where the child is of compulsory school age. The fine must be paid directly to the Local Authority.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- the threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of ten school weeks;
- 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.

Under the national framework for penalty notices, from Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026), our academy is required to consider issuing a fine when;

- A child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 or more consecutive days) for unauthorised reasons
- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 week period

The first penalty notice issued to a parent will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
A second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same pupil is charged at £160.
A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within three years of the date of issue of the first. If national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those three years, alternative action should be taken, including considering prosecution or other attendance legal interventions.

Further information can be found in DFE Working together to improve school attendance

7. Strategies for Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

John 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
- Weekly Reward vouchers
- Yearly Reward vouchers
- Reward events

8. Attendance Monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

John Port Spencer Academy will:

- monitor attendance and absence data weekly, 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 shared daily with the DfE through Arbor inline with Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026) 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.

8.2 Analysing attendance

John Port Spencer Academy will ensure that internal processes allow for:

- analysis of 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;
- looking at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Where required, the academy will work actively with local authority Education Welfare Team to monitor, identify and support any concerns around child attendance.
When working with the local authority, our academy will;

- build strong relationships and work collaboratively;
- identify, discuss and agree actions plans and joint approaches for severely absent pupils (where they do not already have a plan in place);
- discuss and agree approaches for persistently absent, where there have barriers to attendance that require a multi-agency response to overcome;
- agree which agency will act as lead practitioner.

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

John Port Spencer Academy will:

- provide regular attendance reports to teachers, and other academy 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;

8.4 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;
- work with identified children and parents to understand and support reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance;
- signpost and support access to any required services where external barriers to school are identified;
- 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 and;
- consider thresholds for referral to statutory children's agencies.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as a minimum annually and/or when DfE guidance is updated.

10. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

For further detail, refer to Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026

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
K	Attending education provision arranged by local authority	Pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil
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
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil has been granted leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or work abroad
C2	Part time timetable	Pupil is subject to a part time timetable
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with prospective employer/educational establishment

E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Pupil has been suspended or permanently 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 no more than 5 school days**)
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 but before the end of the session.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements put in place by local authority
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y1	No transport provided	Pupil is unable to attend due to transport normally provided by school or local authority is not available

Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to travel due to disruption to travel in a local, national or international emergency
Y3	School is partly closed	Pupil cannot attend due to part of the school premises being closed and is not practicably able to accommodate in areas which remain open
Y4	Whole school is closed	Pupil cannot attend due to the school premises being closed unexpectedly eg, due to adverse weather conditions
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend due to being in police detention/youth detention awaiting sentence/detained under sentence detention
Y6	Public Health guidance or law	Pupil cannot travel or attend school as this would be contrary to published guidance by Secretary of State for Health and Social Care or any legislation relating to transmission of infection or disease
Y7	Other unavoidable cause	Pupil has been affected by an unavoidable emergency that has prevented the pupil from attending a session
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