



Acting Head: **Rebecca Mee**

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Monday 16th September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we commence a new academic year, we want to take a moment to inform you of some important updates to the government's guidelines on school attendance. These changes are part of a broader effort to ensure that every child receives the best possible education, as regular attendance is crucial to their success.

The updated guidance, titled "*Working Together to Improve School Attendance*," introduces several key changes that will directly impact how we approach attendance within Aspire. We want to outline these changes to keep you informed and ensure we are working together to support your child's education.

Key Changes to the Guidance

- 1. Increased Emphasis on Early Intervention:** The updated guidance places a strong emphasis on early intervention. All schools are now required to identify patterns of absence earlier and work closely with parents to address any issues that may be affecting attendance. This means that if your child's attendance begins to decline, we will reach out to you sooner to discuss any challenges and offer support.
- 2. Clearer Expectations and Responsibilities:** The new guidance clarifies the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, including parents and schools. We ask that you notify us as soon as possible if your child is unable to attend school due to illness or other valid reasons, and that you work with us to ensure any barriers to attendance are addressed promptly. We will call you on day 1 of an absence if we have not heard from you.
- 3. Stronger Partnerships with External Agencies:** The updated guidance encourages schools to work more closely with external agencies, including health services, social care, and local authorities, to support families facing challenges that may affect school attendance. This collaborative approach is designed to provide comprehensive support to families.
- 4. Enhanced Support for Vulnerable Pupils:** There is a renewed focus on supporting vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those facing mental health challenges, and those with safeguarding concerns. Aspire academies are committed to providing tailored support to ensure that all pupils are able to attend school regularly and thrive in their learning environments.
- 5. Greater Accountability for Schools:** All schools will be held to higher standards of accountability regarding attendance. This includes regular monitoring and reporting of attendance data, as well as ensuring that appropriate actions are taken when attendance issues arise. These actions include issuing penalty notices if absence thresholds are reached*. We are committed to maintaining transparent communication with you.

How We Will Work Together

To support these changes, we will be implementing several initiatives, including regular attendance reviews, early intervention meetings and increased communication with parents regarding attendance matters. We believe that by working together, we can ensure that every child benefits from a consistent and uninterrupted education.

What We Ask of You

We ask that you continue to prioritise your child's attendance and work closely with us if any issues arise.

If you have any concerns about your child's ability to attend school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact us by calling the school on 01159652291 or emailing reception19@sirjohnsherbrooke.notts.sch.uk

We are here to support you and your child(ren). Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Kate Watson

Chief Executive Officer

ASPIRE Multi-Academy Trust



Mrs Rebecca Mee

Acting Head Teacher

Sir John Sherbrook Junior School

**The threshold for prosecution is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A session is a morning or afternoon registration session, meaning two sessions in an ordinary school day.*

The threshold 'A school week' means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term)."

The Local Authority's Code of Conduct states:

"It is unlikely to amount to an exceptional circumstance if it is merely claimed that:

*a holiday abroad can only be afforded in term time or
that a parent is unable to take leave during school holidays. (This is a matter between the parent and their employer)."*