



## Attendance Policy

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- 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
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). 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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board (LAC) is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and how these compare to national outcomes
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

### **3.2 The Principal**

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Ensuring that there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising 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
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Switzer and can be contacted via telephone number 01282 617627.

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Principal

- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Emma Boillat and she can be contacted via the school office on 01282617627

### **3.5 Class teachers/all school staff**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office in the morning by 9:10 am and in the afternoon by 1:25pm.

In addition to this, all school staff are responsible for:

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere for children that is a safe and learning environment
- Providing a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns
- Being aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- Seeing pupils' attendance as the responsibility of **all** school staff
- Participating in training regarding school systems and procedures

### **3.6 School Admin/Office Staff and Parent Worker**

School admin/office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the pastoral lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Complete first day response by 10am, contacting parents when a reason for absence has not been provided
- Input and update the attendance registers
- Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups
- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance, using Attendance Contracts where appropriate

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9 am on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Attend meetings in school, where needed
- Participate in Attendance Contracts and Common Assessment Framework, and cooperate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies, where needed

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Speak to parents/teachers when issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance
- Cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies

## **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 school day (9am) and once at the beginning of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
  - The original entry
  - The amended entry
  - The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record, for pupils of compulsory school age:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9:30am. The register for the afternoon session will be completed by 1:25pm.

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

Parents/carers must contact the school office on 01282 6172627 and leave a clear message, stating your child's name and reason for absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school 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 school 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 school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers must inform the school office of the appointments in advance (not on the day) and should bring the relevant appointment card to be copied by the office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school 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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school

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
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Parents/carers will be informed of any issues regarding punctuality and support will be offered by our Parent Support Worker, where needed

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit to the addresses registered on the school system; leave a letter advising parents/carers to contact school as soon as possible; inform any allocated family workers (where appropriate) or contact the police to conduct a welfare check
- 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 – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- 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 school will consider involving an education welfare officer

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

- Weekly attendance of the whole school will be shared with parents/carers via the school newsletter/text
- Attendance is tracked on a weekly basis. Where there is a risk of persistent absenteeism, parents will receive a weekly phone call to discuss their child's attendance
- Parents/carers of children, whose attendance is below 90% or is between 90% - 95% will receive a fortnightly text explaining that their child is classed as being a persistent absentee or is at risk of persistent absenteeism. Parents/carer are encouraged to contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team if they feel like they would like further support with their child's attendance
- Monthly texts are sent to parents/carers of children with attendance above 95% as a thank you.
- The school will also regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels each term during Parents' Evenings and through an end of Year report.



## **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The Principal will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad

Attending an interview

Study leave

A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable

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 a child attending school being seriously ill.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background 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, accessible via the school office. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Parent(s) 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 school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school

Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)

Attending provision arranged by the local authority

Attending work experience

If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## 5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### Penalty notices

The Principal (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996

Details of the support provided so far

Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis

A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period

The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

- As a school, we will celebrate good attendance and punctuality by displaying class achievements on the school newsletter
- We will reward good or improving attendance through whole school house competitions and events (such as Leisure Box trips)
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole-school attendance

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

- Attendance is monitored daily and home visits are conducted, where we feel further support is needed to support parents/carers with their child's attendance
- Attendance is monitored weekly and contact is made with parents/carers to discuss individual attendance levels and to offer any further support where needed

- EBSA triage is used to help pinpoint if there are any barriers to children attending school. This information is then used to provide any further support needed. These may include strategy discussion during inclusion meetings, daily check-ins with individual children, social and emotional support (individually or as a group) or referral to outside agencies for support.

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term 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 school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse 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
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **7.4 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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Attendance will be closely monitored weekly and phone calls and texts will be sent to parents/carers, where needed
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Letters will be sent to parents/carers explaining there will be a close monitoring period before being referred to PAST team, if needed

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated and/or annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the local academy council (LAC).

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

### Summary of attendance policy

- At Castercliff Primary Academy, we expect children to attend school every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so
- When your child is not at school, please inform us by 9 o'clock. Let us know your child's name, class and the reason why they are not in school. When it is a good reason like illness, it will be AUTHORISED
- Appointments for the doctor and dentist etc should be made out of school time.
- Unauthorised absences are those which school does not consider reasonable e.g. airport trips, shopping, holidays which have not been approved. This type of absence can lead to the authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings
- Attendance is closely monitored and good attendance is celebrated. We work closely with the Local Authority Attendance Officer to improve attendance
- Children can access school from 8.45 a.m. and are expected to be in class by 9.00am. Children who arrive between 9.00am and 9.20am will receive a late mark. Being just 20 minutes late each morning is the same as having 3 weeks off school each year.

#### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| 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 school  |
| D    | Dual registered               | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J    | Interview                     | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment   |
| P    | Sporting activity             | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting                                |

|          |                           |   |
|----------|---------------------------|---|
|          |                           | activity approved by the school   |
| <b>V</b> | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| <b>W</b> | Work experience           | Pupil is on a work experience placement                                     |

| Code                        | Definition                        | Scenario   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Authorised absence</b>   |                                   |  |
| <b>C</b>                    | Authorised leave of absence       | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances   |
| <b>E</b>                    | Excluded                          | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made   |
| <b>H</b>                    | Authorised holiday                | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances   |
| <b>I</b>                    | Illness                           | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness  |
| <b>M</b>                    | Medical/dental appointment        | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment  |
| <b>R</b>                    | Religious observance              | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance  |
| <b>S</b>                    | Study leave                       | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations   |
| <b>T</b>                    | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school  |
| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |                                   |  |
| <b>G</b>                    | Unauthorised holiday              | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school  |
| <b>N</b>                    | 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 a |



|          |                            |   |
|----------|----------------------------|---|
|          |                            | reasonable amount of time)                              |
| <b>O</b> | Unauthorised absence       | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| <b>U</b> | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed       |

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Definition</b>                                 | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|-------------|---|--|
| <b>X</b>    | Not required to be in school                      | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| <b>Y</b>    | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| <b>Z</b>    | Pupil not on admission register                   | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school  |
| <b>#</b>    | Planned school closure                            | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day  |

## Appendix 2 – Children Missing Education - CME

### Children Missing Education (CME)

**Definition: those children who do not arrive at school and there is no explanation for their absence.**

Day 1 of unexplained absence office staff will:

- Ring/text parents/carers (First day response)

If there is no response from parents/carers by 10:30am office staff will alert the DSL or deputy and:

- Ring other emergency contact numbers provided
- Contact known relatives/friends within the school network (e.g. parents of other children in school)

If the parent/carer is still uncontactable the DSL (or deputy) will:

- Conduct a home visit, leaving a letter to ask parents/carers to contact school immediately if there is no answer at the door.
- Contact other schools that siblings attend (if known)

On Day 1 of absence, if the child has a Social Worker (CLA, CP, CiN) or Family Support Worker (CiN, EHP), or school have other safeguarding concerns, the DSL or deputy will contact the named worker directly or the local duty team or seek advice from CSC.

Office record absence as reason not yet provided (N) for a maximum of 5 days and then amended to unauthorised (O) if an authorised reason is not provided.

If the parent/carer is still uncontactable on Day 2 – 10 of unexplained absence repeat the steps above.

If there is reason to believe the child/family are at risk of harm – refer to the Police via 101.

The Lancashire CME team may be contacted for advice: 01257 517333 / [cme@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cme@lancashire.gov.uk)

CME will:

- Record on CME register
- Liaise with school and carry out searches

No later than Day 10 of unexplained absence:

The Principal / DSL will refer to Lancashire CME via the online form: [https://lancashire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Notification\\_of\\_a\\_Child\\_or\\_Young\\_Person\\_Missing\\_From\\_Education\\_Process](https://lancashire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Notification_of_a_Child_or_Young_Person_Missing_From_Education_Process)

If child found by CME:

- CME will contact school and advise off-roll date.

If child not found by school or CME by 20 school days, school contact CME for off-rolling advice.