

Attendance Policy

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1 Purpose

From September 2013, the Department for Education has updated its guidance on school attendance and the use of parental responsibility measures. The Government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:
 - o Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
 - o Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
 - o Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

2 The Law

Parents/Carers need to make sure pupils attend school regularly and on time. This is required by law. Parents/Carers are breaking the law if children do not attend school and there is no good reason for missing school. Our school and the Local Authority want to help if there is a problem. If attendance is an issue and parents/carers do not accept help and support offered, the Local Authority may issue you with a warning notice, penalty notice or ask you to attend an interview to ask you questions about whether you have broken the law. If the case proceeds to court and a parent is found guilty of an offence, fines of up to £1,000 for a less serious offence and up to £2,500 for a more serious

offence. In very serious cases, the court may involve the probation service or consider up to 3 months in prison.

3 Registration and Punctuality

Castleside Primary School is required by law to record attendance every morning and afternoon and to record any absences as authorised or unauthorised. Children should be in school and ready to start the school day, at 8.55 am. Children arriving after 9.00am must enter school via the main entrance and report to the office. The register closes at 9.15am and any child arriving after this time will receive an unauthorised mark in the register. Good time keeping is expected at Castleside Primary. Please make every effort to ensure that your child arrives on time for school and is collected promptly at the end of the school day. If as the result of an unexpected emergency, you will be late to collect your child please telephone the school office so that we can re-assure your child that you are on your way. Lateness is monitored by the school office, on a weekly basis. Persistent lateness can result in a fixed penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority. Please ensure that the school is informed if someone other than yourself will be collecting your child from school. An authorised absence is when a child is away from school with an appropriate reason for absence, e.g. illness. An unauthorised absence occurs when a parent/guardian gives an invalid reason or no reason at all for their child's non-attendance at school.

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Through working together, it is hoped that we can avoid unauthorised absences and give our children their full educational entitlement by maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality. If your child's attendance falls below an acceptable level the school will contact you to try to improve the situation. If poor attendance persists, you will be invited to a meeting to discuss reasons for poor attendance by the Headteacher. The same is true for children who are persistently late for school.

4. Attendance Procedures

On the first day of absence and any further absence parents/carers are asked to phone the school office before 9.30am to explain. Appointments e.g. doctor/dentist should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If children are well enough, they should come back to school following the appointment. Your child will be marked as present if they are in school during part of the school session. For reasons of security, any parent collecting or returning their child must report to the school office first.

5 Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must

be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

6 Leave of Absence in Term Time

From 1st September 2013, a change to government legislation means that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. Requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are “exceptional circumstances” and holidays are not considered exceptional. Requests for leave must be made to the head teacher in advance, as the Department for Education has told schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken. (Please see included form to be used if parents want to apply for a leave of absence) Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstance during any period of statutory or internal assessments.

7 Help and Support

If you need help with attendance, it is important you talk to us as soon as possible. You may be asked to attend a meeting in school to talk about any issues so a plan can be put in place to help. Sometimes, school may need to involve other services as part of the support.

The Importance of School Attendance

We want our children at Castleside Primary School to enjoy coming to school. Our ‘floor target’ is 96%, but we hope for 100%. Research has proven that there is a high correlation between school attendance and academic performance and success. Absence from school is often the greatest single cause of poor performance and achievement.

Why is it so important to attend every day?

- o Learning is a progressive activity; each day’s lessons build upon those of the previous day(s).
- o Reading the material and completing work independently does not compensate for direct interaction with the teacher.
- o Many classes use discussions, demonstrations, experiments and participation as part of the daily learning activities, and these cannot be made up by those who are absent.

What are the risks of frequent absences?

A penalty notice is a fine to parents or carers if they fail to ensure that their child/ren attend school regularly. If a penalty notice is issued, it will be one fine to cover the whole period of the absence. So the fine would be the same amount for an absence of five days or 10 days. For example, a parent could be issued with £60.00 fine if their child misses one day of school each week over a five week period, whilst another parent might be issued the same fine for one two week block of absence.

8 Children Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is vital that you keep school informed of any change of details. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known. It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and, if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a safeguarding matter.