



The  
**Castle**  
School

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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There are 10 appendices to this policy to support staff.

### **Purpose of the Policy**

1.1 Attendance is central to ensuring all students can fulfil their potential; students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on schooling leaves students vulnerable to falling behind. Students with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

1.2 Castle School has set an attendance target of at least 95% for the school's overall attendance rate.

We seek to achieve this by:

- Promoting the welfare of all students
- Ensuring that every student has access to the full time education to which they are entitled.

1.3 This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of staff, students, parents and carers to encourage regular attendance as well as the procedures, sanctions and strategies available to the school if a student fails to attend school at a satisfactory level.

1.4 Attendance protocols for the Castle School Sixth Form differ from those in the lower school; these can be found in Appendix J.

## **2. Consultation Process**

2.1 This policy was developed in consultation with Governors.

2.2 This policy takes into account the non-statutory and statutory guidance issued by the DfE.

## **3. Relationship to other policies:**

- Behaviour for Learning policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- SEN policy
- Safer Recruiting and Safeguarding Children policy
- Child Protection policy.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 The Headteacher**

- a) The Headteacher must ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements e.g. maintenance of registers and submission of data.

- b) The Headteacher will ensure that effective monitoring, support and intervention is in place for students whose attendance is a cause for concern and will delegate this responsibility to the Deputy Headteacher in charge of attendance and the Attendance Officer.
- c) It is only the Headteacher who can authorise absences and requests for holidays, which will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

#### **4.2 The Governors**

- a) The Governing Body has responsibility for setting the school's attendance target.
- b) The Link Governor for attendance, in conjunction with staff, will be responsible for the monitoring of the school's attendance rate.

#### **4.3 Parents and Carers**

Under the 1996 Education Act, it is the law that parents or carers must ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and punctually. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents or carers may be reported to the Local Authority if their child(ren)'s absence from school is a significant cause for concern. With regard to this, parents and carers must follow the school's procedures for reporting any absence.

- If a child is unwell, a telephone message should be left on the absence line before 10.00 am on the first day of absence, stating the reason the child cannot attend school.
- If a child returns to school following an absence and it has not been reported to the school, a letter addressed to the Attendance Officer must be received on their first day back into school. This can be handed to the tutor or to the Attendance Officer at Student Services
- Absence which remains unauthorised will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.
- Notification of absence for unavoidable medical appointments must be made two weeks in advance of the appointment by telephoning the Attendance Officer or the main school telephone number. Students will not be permitted to leave the school site unless we have a record of this communication. Parents and carers should make all medical appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.
- Parents must, when requested, provide proof, such as an appointment card, prescription details, letter from medical practitioner, when absences require further justification. Parents should be aware that a letter or phone call does not in itself authorise the absence. Only the school's acceptance of explanation will authorise the absence.

- Parents or carers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their child arrives punctually to school every day. If punctuality problems are of a persistent nature, parents or carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the LSP or ALSP to improve the situation. Students are expected on site by 8.40 am to ensure they do not receive a late mark for the morning, which may result in a detention being issued.

### **Students**

- Students should attend school every day unless prevented from doing so due to circumstances which the school would normally authorise.
- Students must arrive at school punctually; 8.40 am is the latest time we would expect a student to arrive as this leaves them sufficient time to register with their tutor and prepare themselves for their first lesson.
- Students are expected to be punctual to all of their lessons throughout the day to minimise disruption to their fellow classmates and teaching staff and to maximise learning.

## **4.4 Staff**

### **Recording Attendance**

- Every half day of absence has to be classified by the school (not the parent or carer) using the approved DfE coding as either authorised or unauthorised.
- All teaching staff must take the electronic register on SIMS at the start of morning registration and at the start of every lesson. Morning registration and Lesson 4 constitute the statutory registration of students.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance:**

Good attendance is promoted and encouraged by:

- VIVO rewards
- Celebration assemblies
- Individual monitoring reports
- ROPs and Summary Reports include attendance data.

- **Recording Absence**

Authorisation of absence can only be made by the school who will code each absence in line with the DfE absence codes. (Appendix A)

### **Requests for absence during term time**

Requests for absence during term time will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will make the final decision as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for absence during term time must be placed in writing and accompanied by a request for authorised absence. (Appendix B)

## **Legal Framework for Attendance**

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home). A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach 16. From September 2013, all 16 year olds are required to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From September 2015, they will be required to continue until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

## **Definition of a Report**

A parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person and;
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

## **Prosecutions by Local Authorities**

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority. Only Local Authorities can prosecute parents. At The Castle School we work closely with the Local Authority to take robust action when required, however, engagement with parents and positive intervention forms an integral part of our approach to raising attendance.

The fines available to the courts if parents are found guilty of the section 444(1) offence include a level 3 fine of up to £1,000. If they are found guilty of the section 444(1A) the fine is at level 4, up to £2,500 and the court can also sentence them to imprisonment for up to 3 months.

## **Penalty Notices**

Penalty notices are fines or £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Penalties can be used where the student's absence has not been authorised by the school.

The Castle School receives the right to use penalty notices in consultation with the EWO. The decision to impose a fixed penalty notice is taken only by the Headteacher.

### **Procedures for responding to absence and unauthorised absence**

- Castle School operates a first day call system. If a reason for absence has not been communicated to the Attendance Officer by 10.00 am on the first day of absence, a call to the parent or carer will be made. This procedure minimises the risks of truancy.
- If a student is absent from school for more than 3 consecutive days without any explanation being given, the school may contact the EWO.

### **Procedures and strategies for responding to the unsatisfactory attendance**

The Deputy Headteacher, Attendance Officer and Year Teams are responsible for the day to day management of attendance, absence and punctuality across the school. High levels of student attendance are encouraged through joint working and a range of strategies:

- The Attendance Officer provides attendance data for each year team on a weekly basis.
- Attendance data is reviewed every 2 weeks by the Attendance Officer, Deputy Headteacher and EWO.
- The EWO meets with the LSP for each year group every 2 weeks to review attendance.
- The Deputy Headteacher, Attendance Officer and EWO closely monitor students with below satisfactory attendance and those from vulnerable groups such as CIC, SEND, ethnic/minority students and those students entitled to the Pupil Premium.
- The EWO meets termly with the SENCO.
- Effective use of attendance data informs early intervention programmes including Medical Action Plans, SAF Attendance Report, PSPs.
- The use of Attendance Phases (Appendix G) supports the school in monitoring students whose attendance is a cause for concern.

## **School Attendance Meetings**

For students whose attendance consistently falls below a satisfactory level, parents or carers and students will be invited to attend a School Attendance Meeting with their LSP and the EWO, where appropriate. This meeting provides an opportunity to review the reasons for absence and to agree actions to support the student in improving their attendance. The school may request evidence in support of high levels of absence. This evidence may constitute copies of prescriptions, appointment cards or letters from medical professionals. The school may seek written permission from the parent or carer in order to contact professionals in the Health Service. The school may decide not to authorise any absence unless proof of illness is provided.

## **School Attendance Panels**

A School Attendance Panel may be called for any student whose attendance continues to fall below a satisfactory level with no good reason. This meeting will be held in school with the EWO. This is a more formal meeting which sets out the parents' or carers' responsibility in ensuring regular attendance to avoid the possibility of legal action.

This is the first stage of formal legal proceedings for unsatisfactory attendance at school. (See Attendance Phase: Appendix G).

## **Appendices**

A: Absence and Attendance Codes

B: Request for Authorised Absence from School

C: Request to issue a Penalty Notice for leave in term time

D: Penalty Notices – info from parents/carers form South Glos

E: School Attendance Meeting form

F: School Attendance Panel form

G: Attendance Phases: Parent Information, School Information

H: Attendance standard letter: Below 90%

I: Broken Weeks standard letter

J: Sixth Form Attendance protocols.

