

# Castle Hill Primary School Attendance Policy



Reviewed on: September 2021

Next Review date: September 2022

Reviewed by: Headteacher & Governing Body

Review frequency: Annually

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
  - Early Help Offer
  - The school Behaviour and Cyberbullying Policy
  - Anti-Bullying and Hate Incidents Policy
  - Relationships and Sex Education Policy
  - Staff Code of Conduct
  - The safeguarding response to 'Children who go Missing in Education'
  - Specific guidance about the role of designated safeguarding lead
- (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and deputies)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
  - Guidance for Safer Working Practice
  - Safe Recruitment Good Practice Guide
  - Safeguarding Policy
  - Acceptable Use Policy
  - Data Protection Policy
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Complaints Policy

Castle Hill Primary School believes that all children have the right to a full-time education regardless of age, aptitude and ability. Our aim is that every child develops their abilities, skills and talents to enable them to participate confidently in the world in which they live. Being 'At school. On time. Every day,' is one of many practices we use to support this aim and is promoted to the children in order for them to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Castle Hill Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor the regular attendance of all pupils, acknowledging that irregular attendance can seriously disrupt continuity of learning, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

Castle Hill Primary School provides a secure, challenging and happy learning environment for all pupils where they are respected and valued. We want every child to be motivated to reach his or her full potential and by encouraging children to attend school regularly and punctually, their experience of school life is enriched.

We believe that good habits need to be instilled at a young age as good attendance and punctuality are central to achieving potential. Children cannot participate if they are not at school therefore; miss out on vital learning experiences. It is also unsettling for children if they arrive late and can cause disruption to other pupils and the class teacher.

The school community consists of parents, children and staff and we must all take responsibility for achieving excellent attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and we are aware of the need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems, which can be used whenever there are concerns over a particular pupil.

## **Aims**

Castle Hill Primary School aims to meet the governments' target of achieving 100% attendance or more for all children in school through working with parents, children and the Local Authority. We aim to create a culture in which good attendance and punctuality is accepted as the norm, and to demonstrate that this is valued by everyone in the school.

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum.
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements.

## Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality with Pupils and Parents

The school newsletter communicates the whole school attendance to the parents each term. Every other term parents are invited into school for an attendance assembly where everyone celebrates the pupils that have achieved 100% school attendance.

## Attendance Targets

The headteacher and governors at Castle Hill School are responsible for setting attendance targets. The school attendance targets must be agreed and signed by the governors and head teacher ensuring they are then relayed to the staff, parents and pupils so everyone is working towards a common goal.

### Overall Attendance Targets and Achievements

Attendance Achieved	
2017	96.6% (Nat 96%)
2018	95.7% (Nat 95.8%)
2019	96.1%
2020	93.8% (COVID AFFECTED)

School Year	Persistent Absentees
2017	5.6%(Nat 8.3%)
2018	7.2% (Nat 8.7%)
2019	5.1%
2020	COVID AFFECTED

Any child whose absence falls below 90% will be monitored by the school attendance officer. The Education Act of 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of this Act states:

*"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence".*

## New Intake

For those parents whose children are beginning their school life at Castle Hill School, they receive an introductory talk by the Head Teacher which includes the subject of attendance. Good habits are promoted from the children's first year of school in Reception Class and are continued to be encouraged right the way through to year 6.

## Registration

All schools are required to keep an admission register (the school roll) and an attendance register which must be marked once at the beginning of the morning and during the afternoon session. The school register (which is initially marked manually and then transferred to the computer), is a legal document kept by the school for a minimum of three years. Children who are not in class at the time of registration are recorded as absent; an appropriate code will be added to the register when a reason for the absence has been provided. Attendance Codes are provided by the Department for Education (DfE).

ATTENDANCE CODE	MEANING
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late - arriving via the front door after 08.55am
U	Late - 9.15am or after - unauthorised
E	Excluded
H	Family Holiday
I	Illness
M	Absent for a medical/dental appointment
C	Other authorised circumstances
O	Unauthorised circumstance
R	Religious Observance
V	Educational Visits
P	Sporting Activity
B	Educated off site
D	Dual Registration
F	Extended Family Holiday
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)
J	Interview
N	No reason yet provided
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
W	Work Experience
X	Non-compulsory School Age Absence
Y	Enforced Closure
Z	Pupil not yet on roll
#	School closed to pupils

# The Start of the School Day

The school opens at 8.00 am for pupils who have paid for the Breakfast Club and the playground is open from 8.50 for children and parents. The school day begins at 9.00 am and all children should be lined up on the playground by this time. Until that time parents of KS1 children must stay with their child as they are responsible for them until 9am.

Any child arriving after the bell has gone will need to enter school via the front door and report to the school office. The pupil's name will be recorded in the late book with reason for their lateness. This lateness affects attendance figures for individual pupils and class groups as well as the whole school and is closely monitored on a daily basis. The register closes at 9.10am so any child arriving after this time will be classed as unauthorised. Any child receiving 10 unauthorised absences may be given a warning and/or fine.

## Punctuality

Although punctuality in the morning is not, at present, a problem at Castle Hill Primary School; for those children who consistently turn up late for school a leaflet will be presented to parents. This outlines the impact that being late has on their child's education (Appendix A). If any persistent lateness occurs, this will be addressed, firstly, by the class teacher then if it continues, the Head Teacher.

## Absence from School

If a pupil is prevented from attending school as a result of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school of the pupil's absence. We ask that this should be done as soon as possible from 8am on the first day of absence and for each day of the pupil's absence (you can leave a message on the answer phone before 8.45am, after this time the phones will be manned). Your message is recorded in the absence diary and retained on file in the school office for future records. This type of absence is classed as authorised absence (see registration codes) unless the Head Teacher or other member of staff is unhappy with the reason provided. Absences that relate to family bereavement (close relatives only) or which are for religious observance will generally be authorised. However, absences for shopping, visiting relatives, day trips and birthdays will be classed as unauthorised even if a letter is provided.

## Truancy

Truancy is currently not a problem at Castle Hill Primary School. However, if this is suspected at any stage the parents will be contacted immediately. Strategies will then be developed within the school/parent partnership to ensure that the underlying issues are addressed.

## Medical Appointments

We encourage parents not to make medical appointments during school time if possible. Medical appointments taken in school time affect attendance figures for individual pupils as well as class groups and the school as a whole. However, we do realise that at times this can be unavoidable so will take this into consideration.

# School Monitoring Procedures

The attendance officer will check registers daily to maintain accurate records. If no contact has been received by the school regarding the reason for a pupil's absence, the school will contact the parents by phone. If no satisfactory reason is received the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

The Attendance Officer and school secretary will meet on a weekly basis to discuss identified pupils which are causing them concern with their attendance. The following process is adhered to in order to encourage better attendance:

**DAY 1:** The school secretary will phone parents/guardians to voice a cause for concern and encourage them to get their child/ren to school on time;

**WEEK 1:** Parents of children with unexplained absence will receive a letter requesting a reason for non-attendance at school (Appendix B). If no reply is received within a week any outstanding absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

**WEEK 2:** If attendance does not show improvement after 2 weeks the Attendance officer will contact parents via phone/letter (Appendix C) to organise a meeting to discuss support they may need. An agreement will be made and signed by both school and parent/carer (Appendix D);

**1 MONTH:** After a 4 week period, if no improvement is evident the Head teacher will contact the parent/guardian via letter & phone to arrange a meeting to which the attendance Officer will also attend (Appendix E);

**6 WEEKS:** If the parent/s do not attend the meetings above, make contact with the school or if the attendance of the pupil does not improve, formal proceedings can be instigated by the LA.

**END OF SEASONAL TERM:** If a pupils attendance has shown concern over Autumn, Spring or Summer Term (93% or below), a letter will be sent to the parent/carer explaining that their child's attendance will be monitored closely during the next year (Appendix F).

When a pupil leaves Castle Hill School, attendance patterns are always passed on to the child's next school.

## Holidays

The Education Regulations 2013, which came into force on 1st September 2013, removed all references to holidays and extended leave. The 2013 amendments made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time. The school uses the term holiday to mean any holiday or time away from the classroom. If a pupil goes on holiday the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Unauthorised absence could incur a penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority.

Head teachers can authorise a pupil's absence during term time, but the merits of such a request are now required to be exceptional. The guiding principle is that term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together. Head teachers will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy is that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional

circumstances. The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is wholly at the head teacher's discretion based on their assessment of each request.

Any intention to take children out of school in term time should be carefully considered. If the children will be absent from school a 'request for absence' form must be completed prior to travel. A separate form must be completed for each child. These are available from the school office. Please be aware that when a penalty notice is issued the fine is for each child per parent. For example 3 children taking unauthorised absence could mean  $\text{£}60 \times 3 = \text{£}180$  per parent =  $\text{£}360$  for a family of five.

## School Responsibilities

All staff at Castle Hill Primary School will provide an ethos which places a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. Staff will therefore encourage good habits by:

- Ensuring that registers are marked accurately and promptly every day;
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence - a letter from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence;
- Responding to those children who are absent with care, but firmly and consistently;
- Contacting parents when staff are concerned about a pupil's absence and making a record of this;
- Consulting with the INCO/Head teacher if a pupil's attendance gives any cause for concern;
- Acknowledging good or improved attendance of individual pupils.

## Parental Responsibilities

We also encourage parents to promote an ethos with their children/family which places a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. We would ask parents therefore to encourage good habits by:

- Making sure your child gets enough sleep so they are able to wake up in plenty of time to get ready for school and eat a good breakfast;
- Make sure your child arrives on the school playground by 08.50;
- Contact the school as soon as possible in the morning if your child will not be attending school stating the reason;
- Make sure that your child attends school wearing the correct uniform and brings appropriate kit and provision for lunch;
- Help your child by showing an interest in school life;
- If your child appears reluctant to attend school, contact the child's class teacher immediately to discuss any concerns. There could be a number of reasons for this reluctance such as difficulties with school work, friendship problems or family difficulties. It is important to identify any reasons for a reluctance to attend school quickly and before it becomes a more serious issue.

## Pupils Responsibility

Additionally, we all encourage the pupils to take responsibility for themselves and others and to play a positive role in the life of the school, making the most of educational opportunities available. We therefore expect children to:

- Respect themselves and others;
- Do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually (e.g. getting up on time/when they are asked to);
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied and this is stopping them attending school;
- Be kind and caring to each in order to create a sense of belonging;
- Talk to an adult if they have any worries or concerns over school that make them feel like they don't want to come;
- Wear the correct school uniform and arrive at school ready to learn.

## **Local Authority/Education Welfare Service**

For pupils/families that show no improvement in attendance despite support offered, legal proceedings can take place. Although as a school we hope never to reach this stage, where the use of enforcement processes is found to be necessary, the school will support this. For information on enforcement and penalty notices please visit:

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=17135&detailid=18307&startat=P>

## **'Children Missing from Education'**

The Out of School Report (Ofsted 2004) estimated that there are approximately 10,000 Children Missing from Education (CME) in the UK. For the purpose of this document a Child Missing from Education is defined as: "Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is not registered at any formally approved education activity (e.g. school, alternative curriculum, home education), and has been out of any education provision for 20 school days.

Additional information on this subject can be found at:

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=17123&detailid=93750&startat=C>

# Castle Hill Primary School Attendance Action Plan



<b>Child's Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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<b>Year Group:</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>		
<b>Target</b>	<b>Parent</b>	<b>Pupil</b>	<b>School</b>
<b>Target 1:</b>			
<b>Target 2:</b>			
<b>Target 3:</b>			

<b>Signed:</b>			
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Dear.....

We are writing to let you know that we will be closely monitoring your child's attendance next term due to their overall percentage for this term falling below 93%.

As a school if a child's attendance falls below 93% (which means they have had more than 9 days off school that term) we have to look together at ways this can be improved. Although letters have been sent out outlining the importance of children being at school, on time, every day – unfortunately your child's attendance has still fallen below 93%.

We will always look to avoid prosecuting parents and to this end we would appreciate you giving some thought to the way your child's attendance can be improved next term. We are happy to help in any way possible, through meetings to discuss morning routines/support or through outside agencies.

Children are legally entitled to attend school for 190 days per year leaving them with 175 days to attend appointments and holidays. We trust that you will be able to support us with your child's education.

We look forward to seeing you next term and hope that you enjoy your break.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Dear

Re:

We notice from our records that your child, \_\_\_\_\_ has been absent from school on the dates listed below and we have not yet been notified as to the reason for her absence.

We would appreciate it if you could complete the reply slip below and return it to \_\_\_\_\_ class teacher, or to the school office as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

To:

Name:

Dates and Sessions of absence	Reasons

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

Re:

We notice from our records that your child has been absent from school and we have not yet been notified as to the reason for their absence even though we have contacted you.

Your child's attendance is now \_\_\_\_\_ therefore we need to meet to discuss how I can support you to improve this. We expect all children to achieve at least 95% attendance over the school year and as you can see your child's current attendance is not set to achieve this.

As discussed on the phone we will meet on \_\_\_\_\_ to share ideas on a way forward. This is a supportive meeting to help ensure that your child's attendance improves swiftly.

I look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Dear

I am concerned about your child's attendance in school. Their attendance is ..... which is below the legal requirement of 95%. Poor attendance is always reported to our Local Authority who decides whether further action is required and as a school we would prefer this not to happen.

Although you have been contacted and asked to notify the school as to your child's absence this still has not happened consistently enough. Therefore, I would like to meet with you to discuss how we can continue to support you in improving this. Your child is legally entitled to a full time education and it is our responsibility as a school to ensure this happens.

Please complete the slip below to arrange a suitable time to meet with me to discuss this issue as we need to work together to make your child's life at school a success.

If I do not hear from you within 2 days of receipt of this letter I will have to refer this to the local authority to follow up further.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

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### Attendance Follow up Appointment

I would like to come in and meet with you regarding my child  
\_\_\_\_\_ attendance on the following day/time:

Day/Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Castle Hill Primary School

Application to take a child out of school during term time

(to be completed and returned to the Head Teacher before the absence takes place)

I wish to take my  
child/ren.....  
out of school for the (dates) ..... to  
.....

The reason for removing my child/ren from education during term time is:

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Signature of Parent/Carer .....

Date.....

Your children have a right to receive a full time education which is 190 days.

Can I remind you that any holidays not taken in Term 6, (Monday 3rd June – Friday 19th July 20\*\*), will not be authorised, resulting in the Education Welfare contacting you.

Thank you for your understanding.

Head Teacher

Dear

I am writing to you in response to your request for time off for a holiday during school term time. As I have previously communicated, as a school we will no longer authorise holidays requested during terms 1 – 5.

Children have a legal right to attend school 190 days of the year. Following guidelines from the Local Authority and the Department for Education (DfE) we are being directed to not allow holidays during term time. However, the staff and governors at Finlay have discussed this at length and understand the cost implications for families taking holidays during the school holidays. We have therefore decided that we are prepared to authorise family holidays during term 6 only (3rd June – 19th July 2013). This is due to the majority of the curriculum and tests having been covered by this time.

I understand that this can be frustrating and disappointing for you but I am sure you can understand the importance of your child receiving the education they are entitled to. If you choose to take a holiday without school permission this can result in a penalty notice which we would try to avoid at all times.

If you would like to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Head Teacher



*Our school registers are open from 9.00am - 9.10am. Any child arriving after this time will be recorded as unauthorised.  
10 unauthorised absences can lead to a fine.*

<b>Late Each Day</b>		<b>Lost per Year</b>
5 minutes	→	3 days lost
10 minutes	→	6.5 days lost
15 minutes	→	10 days lost
20 minutes	→	13 days lost
25 minutes	→	16 days lost
30 minutes	→	19 days lost

If you are having problems with morning routines leading to arriving late at school please contact the school.

01452 863380