

Castle Hill Primary School Attendance Policy



Reviewed on: September 2023

Next Review date: December 2024

Reviewed by: Headteacher & Governing Body

Su Broadhurst

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 and objectives

At *Castle Hill Primary School* we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

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.

Roles and responsibilities

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

The governing body/academy trust board are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies

- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- *The Governing Body ensures the Standards Committee have attendance as an item on their agenda at every meeting. The % of attendance is reported to the full governing Body at every Full Governor Meeting through the Head's Report.*

The headteacher 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
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The INCO supports the Head teacher by:-

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

- Working with school staff eg pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENDco to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The class teacher/form tutor is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office *as soon as possible after the register is completed.*

School administration/office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents

School processes for recording attendance and absence

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- 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

We will also record:

- 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 *8.45am* on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at *8.45am* and will be kept open until *9am*. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at *1pm*.

Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by *insert time* or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

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.

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.

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

The Headteacher is at the gate in the mornings and encourages families to be aware of time so that their children benefit from the start of the school day.

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.

Please inform the school office of the appointment.

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 headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We do not define 'exceptional circumstances' as *a holiday in term time under any circumstances*.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least *two weeks* before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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.

Procedures following unexplained absence

- 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 *discuss what further measures are appropriate. These might include a house visit.*
- 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 endeavour to visit the child at home.

Strategies for promoting attendance

The school promotes,,incentivises and celebrates good attendance by holding a 100% assembly each term. Howevermostly, we want pupils to understand the intrinsic value of turning up to school everyday as something that is a reward in itself- helping them establish friendship groups and develop their love of learning.

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels *through reports.*

- Monitor attendance and absence data *monthly* across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether 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.

- 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
- Provide regular attendance reports to *class teachers* and other school leaders (*eg pastoral lead, SENDco*), 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

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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

Legal sanctions

The school can request Gloucestershire County Council to issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Attendance - Schoolsnet \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/attendance-schoolsnet) NB if schools use this link they will not have to update the document when it is changed on GCC's website

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £60 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £120 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice - note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil

Any person who has care of a child or pupil ie lives with and looks after the child

Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE update, and annually by *the Head teacher*. At every review the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

Overall Attendance Targets and Achievements

Attendance Achieved		National
2017	96.6%	96%
2018	95.7%	95.8%
2019	96.1%	
2020	93.8% (COVID AFFECTED)	
2021	95%	
2022	94.7%	93.8%

School Year	Persistent Absentees	National
2017	5.6%(Nat 8.3%)	8.3%
2018	7.2% (Nat 8.7%)	8.7%
2019	5.1%	
2020	COVID AFFECTED	
2021	10.4%	Lowest 20% of all schools
2022	11.3%	19%

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".

Children who are absent from education for prolonged period

The Out of School Report (Ofsted 2004) estimated that there are approximately 10,000 Children Missing from Education (CME) in the UK. "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



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

Signed:			
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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 90% 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 90%. 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

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:

Signature of Parent/Carer

Date.....

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

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 term time.

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.

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 8.45am - 9.00am. Any child arriving after this time will be recorded as unauthorised.

10 unauthorised absences can lead to a fine.

Late Each Day		Lost per Year
5 minutes	⇒	6.5 days lost
10 minutes	⇒	10 days lost
15 minutes	⇒	3 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