Attendance Policy

Castlewood School

Approved by: Mr P Leivers (Chair of Governors)   **Date:** 16/05/2019

Signed:

Last reviewed on: May 2019

Next review due by: May 2022

Contents

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Northern House School (Solihull) adheres to the following attendance aims:

- To achieve a 95% + attendance rate
- To restrict days taken as holiday, during term time in any one year.
- To promote partnership between parents and school, working for the benefit of the children's learning
- To involve other agencies when all possible school based supportive measures have been put in place.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- 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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School expectations

3.1 Expectations of pupils:

1. That they will attend school regularly, aiming for an attendance rate of 95 – 100%

2. That they will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day

3. That they will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school

3.2 Expectations of parents:

1. That they will ensure their child attends school, aiming for a 95 – 100% attendance rate

2. That they will contact school as soon as it is reasonably practical, before 9.30 am, whenever their child is unable to attend

3. That any absence is followed by a written explanation of why the child was absent and for what period of time if it is more than one day

4. To ensure that their child arrives in school well prepared for the school day

5. To contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school

6. To refrain from taking the child out of school for holidays, or occasional days, unless there are significant exceptional circumstances

3.3 Expectations of staff:

1. To ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of presence / absence

2. To make early contact with parents when a child fails to attend

3. To refer to appropriate support agencies as required

4. To communicate clear expectations of what is good attendance

5. To give clear guidance as to how good attendance is promoted

6. To display attendance data appropriately in tutor rooms

3.4 Expectations of Governors:

1. To monitor the effectiveness of the policy through Head Teacher reports

2. To support the school in encouraging good attendance through role modelling

3. To communicate with parents and other agencies as appropriate

4. To attend celebration assemblies for good attendance

4. School procedures

4.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 10.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.20pm and will be kept open until 1.25pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Please ring the school office directly on 0121 7489760.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school office in advance of a medical/dental appointment either by:

- Phoning on 0121 7489760
- Emailing on office-solihull@northernhouse.org.uk
- In writing
- In person at reception

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 5.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed at 10.00am will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code; unauthorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If the lateness is persistent and parents/carers fail to work with school to address the issues, the matter can be followed up by the attendance lead. If there is still no improvement, a request is made to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

4.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If no information, regarding the absence of a child, has been received by 9.30am, the office will telephone the parent to check the reason for absence.

If there is no initial reason given for the absence, or letter of explanation on the child's return, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Parents/Carers will receive reports on their child's level of attendance at Annual Review meetings, if requested or parent/carer consultation meetings where a concern has been raised.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as something that would not happen regularly.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 4.2 and 4.3

- 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

5.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can request fines to be issued by the Local Authority to parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Incentives for good attendance:

- Attendance data will be checked regularly by the attendance lead to identify any issues

- Attendance will be discussed regularly at SLT meetings

- Attendance will be discussed at regular staff meetings where staff have the opportunity to express any concerns

- A certificate for 100% attendance will be given out weekly in assembly, with additional certificates for ½ termly, termly and for the year

- Half termly and termly attendance vouchers for pupils with 100% attendance will be awarded.

- Certificates for improved attendance will be given as appropriate

- Certificates and vouchers will be given out for achievement of personal attendance targets

- Attendance focus weeks will take place with different rewards and initiatives to promote good attendance

- Reasons for regular attendance and arriving on time, well prepared for school will be raised in assemblies and PSHCE sessions

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance lead monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving the local authority education enforcement team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The governing board

The Local Advisory Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

8.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and will request for a fixed-penalty notice to be issued where necessary.

8.3 The attendance lead

The attendance lead:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with the education enforcement team to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to apply for fixed-penalty notices

8.4 Form tutors

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

8.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed 3 yearly by the Headteacher and attendance lead. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policies.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Present		
/	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
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised Absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
Other Circumstances		
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day