



# CAISTOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Approved by Full Board of Trustees:**

**January 2023**

**Last reviewed:**

**January 2023**

**Signed:**

*Lucy Jackson*

**Chair of Trustees**

## 1. Aims

Caistor Grammar School is committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. 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.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The board of Trustees

The board of trustees is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data at the Curriculum & Student Welfare Committee meetings. Canon Rev I Robinson is the Attendance Trustee.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **3.2 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Liaising with the Student Welfare Assistant regarding calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Assistant Head (Pastoral), Mrs Athanasia Ellerby and can be contacted via [enquiries@caistorgrammar.com](mailto:enquiries@caistorgrammar.com)

### **3.4 The Student Welfare Assistant**

The school welfare assistant is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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 Local authorities to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher/assistant head (pastoral) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The student welfare assistant can be contacted via [enquiries@caistorgrammar.com](mailto:enquiries@caistorgrammar.com)

### **3.5 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 by 8.55am and 1.10pm each day. They will contact home after a student has three consecutive days of unplanned/unaccounted for absence.

Please contact [enquiries@caistorgrammar.com](mailto:enquiries@caistorgrammar.com) if you wish to speak with your child's Form Tutor or Head of Section.

### **3.6 School Admin staff**

School Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Heads of Section in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.50am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Share specific reasons for student absence.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.8 Students**

Students are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Arrive in school on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session, additionally a register is taken at the start of each new lesson. It will mark whether every student 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.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a student 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.

Students must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 8.55am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.05pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day (and on each day thereafter), of an unplanned absence by 8.50am, or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff (see also section 7).

Parents can notify the school by email ([absence@caistorgrammar.com](mailto:absence@caistorgrammar.com)) or by contacting the school by telephone. An answerphone enables parents to leave a message.

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 student's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents complete an online medical absence form (available on the school website). An absence mark is entered into the register.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made as far in advance as possible, using the online absence form. Approval will be by the Headteacher, or in their absence, the Deputy Head. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A student who arrives late:

- Must sign in at reception.
- If their arrival is after the register is closed they will be marked absent.
- After the register has closed, students will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Punctuality is identified as one of the determiners of a well ordered school where learning is a priority. Form tutors and teaching staff are expected to be at the classroom in good time to be able to take an electronic register.

## **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

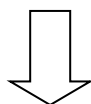
- Call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. Safeguarding calls for unexplained absences begin at 9.15am. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may call the police.
- Identify whether the absence 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 consider involving the local authority.

The process is summarised below:

### **Stage 1 - Attendance Below DfE 'trigger' point**

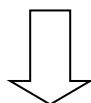
A letter will be sent home if a student's attendance falls below DfE trigger point, informing you that they have fallen below the expected attendance.

### **Stage 2 - Attendance below 90%**



Should attendance not improve an attendance panel meeting may be arranged, where Parents/carers of the student will be invited to a meeting with the Head Of Section (HOS).

### **Stage 3 – Attendance below 85%**



Parents/carers of the student will be contacted again and invited to a further meeting to discuss and implement strategies to support improved attendance.

**Stage 4** – if a student accumulates 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence, LCC will be informed of the absence and the strategies in place to support increased attendance.



## **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

Attendance is recorded on written reports and assessments which are issued once to each year group at staggered points in the year.

Students who achieve full attendance will receive a certificate at the end of each term.

If a student's attendance falls below 95%, a letter informing parents of their attendance percentage will be issued. Such information will be shared with parents after the first half term, in November and half termly thereafter, if attendance continues to be below 95%.

## **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student 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 student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as compassionate grounds (e.g. visiting terminally ill parent or sibling), funerals, family celebrations (e.g. degree ceremonies for parents). The Headteacher will use their discretion and explain to parents why an absence will be unauthorized.

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 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision
- Study leave is not granted by default and is only granted to students in Year 11 and Year 13. Provision will still be made available for students who wish to revise in school.
- A parental request for Flexi-Schooling can be made, however the Headteacher may refuse to agree to such requests. There is no specific appeal against the decision of a Headteacher not to agree to a flexi-schooling request. Should the Headteacher agree to a flexi-schooling request, as the child remains on the school roll, the school retains the responsibility for the child's progress and for tracking that progress. If the school has concerns about the provision of education at home, the school may withdraw its agreement to the flexi-schooling arrangement. The child would then be required to attend at school on a full-time basis whilst s/he remained registered, or the parent assumes responsibility for arranging their child's education on a full time basis (i.e de-registration for the purposes of Elective Home Education).

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 student 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 or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We promote and celebrate good attendance in school assemblies and at the end of each term students with 100% attendance that term receive a certificate.

The school wishes to work with parents in the case of students who are persistently absent. Meetings offering support, interventions and reasonable adjustments are held as appropriate.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

Attendance is monitored by the student welfare assistant, form tutors and Heads of Section. Parents are encouraged to share specific reasons for student absence. If a student's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss reasons for this; if it exceeds 10 days a meeting with an attendance panel will be scheduled and Lincolnshire County Council will be informed

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

Caistor Grammar School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Benchmark against other secondary schools.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-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 Board of Trustees.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

Caistor Grammar School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

Caistor Grammar School will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Section and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students 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

### **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student 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 students 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

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually, by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full board of trustees.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

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