



CAISTOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by Full Board of Trustees:

December 2024

Last reviewed:

October 2024

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
- Earlier interventions for students at risk of Persistent Absence and Persistent Absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school
- Increased awareness of impact for parents taking term time holidays with the aim to decrease term time holidays

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons by using Bromcom to report when students are late to the lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. 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 and Sharing daily pupil attendance data. 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
- The Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Childcare (Provision of Information About Young Children) (England) Regulations 2009 (2009 Regulations) (as amended)

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. Gary Thomas 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 (School Attendance Champion) responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- 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 Attendance Officer regarding calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Attending termly Targeted Support Meetings (TSM) with the Local Authority
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The School Attendance Champion (from September 2024 is Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral), Mr Steven Kemshall and can be contacted via enquiries@caistorgrammar.com

3.4 The School Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Daily identification of students with no reason for absence given
- Conducting Safeguarding calls to establish whereabouts and reason for absence, and reporting on Bromcom
- Share daily attendance data with DfE through WONDE
- Weekly attendance data scrapes from Bromcom for all individual students

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7), including notifying a form tutor when a student has had 3 consecutive days absence
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, the Headteacher and the Trustees reporting concerns about attendance
- Working with Lincolnshire County Council and attending Termly Targeted Support Meetings (TSM) to tackle persistent absence
- Delivery of targeted interventions for those students at most risk, including School Attendance Panels. (SAPS)
- Be particularly mindful of student absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to parents through half termly attendance letters, including clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance through the attendance matters notice board and posters in each classroom
- In the cases where we have cause for concern with regards to attendance the Attendance officer may conduct home visits
- Advising the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Officer can be contacted via absence@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. Form tutors provide a safe and supportive environment and set high expectations for all students in their form, making school a place that students want to be. They communicate these expectations daily and clearly through Personal Development lessons. They will contact home after a student has had three consecutive days of absence to check in with the family and offer avenues of support to enable them a smooth return to school.

Please contact 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:

- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer/ 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
- Email/ or 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
- Proof of all appointments must be provided (pre or post) to allow for the absence to be authorised. This can be for example, but not limited to, copies appointment letters, screen shots of text messages

<i>School Day</i>			
08.50 am	Registration	1.05 pm	Registration
08.55 am	Lesson 1	1.10 pm	Lesson 6
09.25 am	Lesson 2	1.45 pm	Lesson 7
10.00 am	Lesson 3	2.20 pm	Break
10.35 am	Break	2.35 pm	Lesson 8
10.50 am	Lesson 4	3.10 pm	Lesson 9
11.25 am	Lesson 5	3.45 pm	School finishes
12.00 am	Lunch		

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 Attendance Officer (see also section 7).

Parents can notify the school by email (absence@caistorgrammar.com) or by contacting the school by telephone. An answerphone enables parents to leave a message and we kindly request a detailed reason for absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. For further information regarding absences please refer to the NHS guidance Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

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.

Proof of all appointments must be provided (pre or post) to allow for the absence to be authorised. This can be for example, but not limited to, copies appointment letters, screen shots of text messages.

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. If a student is late to a lesson without a valid reason then a break time detention will be issued in the first instance. If a student is persistently late, they may be put on a punctuality report.

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:

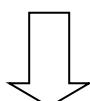
- Call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. Safeguarding calls for unexplained absences begin at 9.15am. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may call the police
- Identify whether the absence 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
- In some cases where we have concern about a student's absence, home visits may be conducted

Parents will receive a letter each half term informing them of their child's attendance percentage. The letter will state the category of attendance their child falls into. These are in line with those determined by the DfE. If a child does not fall into the category of good attendance, support is offered to the families. Such information will be shared with parents after the first half term, in November and half termly thereafter.

The process for below 95% is summarised below:

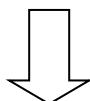
Stage 1 - Attendance Below 95%

A letter will be sent home if a student's attendance is below the threshold of 'good attendance' in line with the DfE, informing you that they have fallen below the expected attendance.



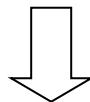
Stage 2 - Attendance below 90%

Should attendance not improve an School attendance panel (SAP) meeting may be arranged, where Parents/carers of the student will be invited to a meeting with the Attendance Officer and a member of the Pastoral team



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. A “notice to improve” will be the “final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued”. The threshold can be met with “any combination of unauthorised absence,” e.g., four sessions in term time plus six incidents of arriving late.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Attendance is recorded on Progress Reviews which are issued termly.

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

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 request for a leave of absence will not be granted for the purpose of a holiday unless deemed to be exceptional circumstances.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as compassionate grounds e.g. visiting terminally ill family, 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 4 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.

If you then choose to take your child out of school during term time and it is not deemed to be exceptional circumstances and/or has not been approved by the School, then this will be coded as an unauthorised absence and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for the period of absence. Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty may result in further legal action being taken against you.

For further information regarding absences please refer to the DfE guidance
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority will have to consider a fine for parents, if a student misses 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Only two fines can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. Any second notice will automatically be charged at £160.

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 for that term receive a certificate.

Students who have 100% attendance for the year will receive a postcard home.

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 Attendance Officer, Form Tutors and Heads of Section. Parents are expected 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 this will be discussed at the TSM meetings and then shared 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
- 6th Form Attendance 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 attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
K	Dual registered	Pupil is attending education provision arranged by the local authority

J1	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
C1	Authorised leave of absence	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Authorised leave of absence	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Excluded	Pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness, not medical or dental appointment
M	Medical/dental appointment	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
Q	Access Arrangements	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Usual Transport	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Wider Transport	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	School Premises	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	School closure	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Criminal Justice detention	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Public Health	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unavoidable circumstance	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Unauthorised absence

G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not granted 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	Absent in other or unknown circumstances

U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
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Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day