

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Reviewed:	January 2020
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How good is your child's attendance?

Action/Cause	Lead	Strategy	Support
95%-100%	SCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter home + congratulations • Informing students of trends • 100% list on yr noticeboards • Keep attendance as a priority in lesson 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward points issued • Attendance board • Cyclical awards for 100%
92%-95%	PL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the attendance • Letter home informing students/parents • Progress leaders to meet to target 95%+ • 4 weekly monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement by Progress Leader • Discuss reasons for not >95%
90%-92%	HOY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter home • Meeting with Head of Year • Weekly check in for 4 week monitoring • Phone call home if necessary • Importance of 95% + explaining how to achieve this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement by Head of Year • Regular checking during route checks • Social check-ins at lunch/break
85%-90% (PA)	SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters home with warnings • Meeting with Senior Leader link • 4 weekly monitoring of students • Phone calls home/parental meeting if necessary • Importance of achieving 95% + over next monitoring period of 4 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement by Senior Leader • Weekly/daily check in • If necessary 1-1 discussions with students to explain reasons and strategies to improve attendance
80%-85% (PA)	PBK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters home with warnings • Meeting with Headteacher • 4 weekly monitoring • Phone calls home/parental meeting if necessary • Importance of achieving 95% + over next 4 week monitoring period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement and reasoning • Weekly/daily check in if necessary
<80% (PA) Contracts & Referrals	APSO/RHH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters home with warnings • Meetings with Safeguarding Officer and APSO • Contracts set up for certain students • Very close monitoring – daily phone calls am • Parental meetings with students to explain importance of 95%+ attendance • Governors attendance panels/meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home visits for family support • Referral to APSO and LA.

Context

The academy is committed to ensuring that students and parents understand the absolute importance of high attendance. Attendance in school is incredibly important for academic and social development, but we also need to ensure that we know students are safe as well. At Castle Hall Academy we aim to create a secure and caring learning environment to ensure our students want to attend school.

Aims

- To maintain exceptionally high levels of attendance and punctuality across the academy, significantly above local and national averages.
- To work with parents/carers to ensure individual student attendance is as high as possible, supporting and challenging where needed.
- To regularly monitor attendance patterns so that the academy can put appropriate interventions in place to support young people and their families.

1. An Approach

At Castle Hall Academy, we have strategies in place for monitoring attendance and encouraging and supporting students to maintain and achieve good attendance. These include the identification of poor attenders and/or concerning patterns of non-attendance for referral to the Safeguarding Officer, and group and individual rewards for good attendance. These are constantly being revised.

2. Components

- Electronic registration – SIMS
- A Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance and punctuality - Mrs S Coe - Assistant Headteacher
- Safeguarding Officer - Miss R Haigh
- Administration Support - Mrs N Jackson
- InTouch text messages/Follow-up phone calls
- Home visits
- Rewards for good attendance and punctuality
- A system of checks and follow-ups
- Pastoral support for students identified with low attendance
- Competition between year groups.

3. Practice

Registration marks are taken twice a day. Morning registration opens at **8.30am** and closes at **9.00am** afternoon registration opens at **12.00pm** and closes at **1.00pm**. Students who are in school at 8.40am and 1-10pm will be marked present (/∧) on SIMS. Registers are completed for each lesson during the day.

Students arriving to the academy up to 30 minutes after a registration has opened will be marked 'L' on SIMS and will be issued with a 30 minute detention on that day to signal the importance of punctuality and to make up the lost learning time.

Students who arrive after the 30 minute deadline following registration will be marked late after close of registration using the 'U' code on SIMS (this is classed as an unauthorised absence). They will also be issued with a 30 minute detention on that day.

In exceptional circumstances (such as severe weather or public transport disruptions), the closing of registration may be delayed at the discretion of the academy.

4. Parental Responsibility

Only keep your child away from the academy if **really necessary**. Please remember if students are taken ill at the academy, we will contact you and arrange to send them home.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so **we need to have your contact numbers at all times**. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number and e-mail address - if we don't then something important may be missed.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the academy from 8:00am on the first day of absence, to explain the reason for the absence (tel: **01924 523232**) or email StudentAbsence@castlehall.com. It is your duty to inform us of any absence. If this doesn't happen then you will be expected to reply to the text that we send you to remind you that your child is not here. Should you still fail to contact us, your child's absence will be marked as unauthorised and the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer will be informed. The academy must be made aware of the reason for a child's absence as both safeguarding and educational well-being are priorities.
- Send a letter with your child to our attendance office on return to the academy, giving the reason for the absence, even if you have already telephoned us.
- Where possible avoid medical appointments in academy time, but if it is absolutely necessary then please ensure that your child attends prior to and after the appointment. Medical appointments should be covered by a letter/note from yourself and a medical appointment card. If students have to leave the academy during academy time they must sign out at reception and sign back in at reception on return. Medical appointments which cannot be made outside of school: these absences, if granted, will be recorded as authorised using the 'M' code on SIMS.
- Inform the academy if and why your child is going to be late. Students must sign in at reception before going to lessons so we know that they have arrived in school.
- If a parent knows a child is going to be absent from school, a letter together with a completed absence form (copies available on reception) should be addressed to the Headteacher and sent to the academy with as much notice as possible. Any leave of absence must be requested in advance and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher. Once the academy has received the request, parents will receive a letter from the Headteacher.

If your child is absent we will

- Text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Pastoral Leaders, Senior Leaders or Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Attendance and Pupil Support Service at Kirklees if your child's attendance becomes a cause for concern

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in student reports and parents' meetings;
- Report to you three times each year on how your child is performing in the academy via grade sheets, their attendance and punctuality rate and how this relates to their attainments;

- Celebrate good attendance in assemblies.

5. Religious Observance and register codes

- For a day set aside *exclusively* for religious observance: students will be granted one day for each occasion of religious observance, with a **maximum of 3 days over one academic year**. These absences, if granted, will be recorded as authorised using the 'R' code on SIMS
- For periods of time when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes, these absences, if granted, will be recorded as authorised using the 'T' code on SIMS.
- Student absence will be recorded as unauthorised when the academy is not satisfied with the reasons for the absence:
 - Code 'G' will be used for unauthorised absences. Where leave of absences is taken during term time, the academy may respond with a fixed penalty notice from the local authority.
 - Code 'N' will be used when parents have not yet provided the academy with a reason for absence.
 - Code 'O' will be used when no satisfactory reason for a child's absence has been provided.

6. Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from the academy has to be classified by the academy (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the academy for a good reason, such as illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in academy time), emergencies or other unavoidable reasons.

Unauthorised absences are those which the academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the academy and the Attendance and Pupil Support Service at Kirklees using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Unauthorised extended family leave/holidays
- Parents/carers keeping children out of the academy unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the academy day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at the academy too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Not returning after a period of exclusion

Whilst any child may be absent because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend the academy. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the academy, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never acceptable to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

- The academy takes seriously its duty to safeguard the welfare of all its students. Unexplained absences and a lack of contact from parents or carers may cause us concern and lead us to involve other agencies such as Kirklees Education Safeguarding team inc Attendance and Pupil Support. We will contact Children's Social Care within 2 days for any child with a Child Protection Plan.
- Students must have strong attendance in order to qualify for the academy reward events. The academy also rewards excellent attendance.
- The academy carefully monitors attendance on a daily basis and attendance is discussed fortnightly with the school Attendance and Pupil Support Officer.

- Parental meetings are held to challenge and support our parents in raising the attendance of any child the academy has concerns about.
- Where a child is failing to attend the academy an attendance plan will be drawn up in consultation with the family and, possibly, external agencies, including the Kirklees Education Safeguarding Team.

7. Why regular attendance is so important - Learning

- Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
- Please ensure your child's regular attendance at the academy. It is your legal responsibility and any absence from the academy without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

8. Safeguarding

Your child(ren) may be at risk of harm if they do not attend the academy regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this academy, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend this academy on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter

9. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they are missing valuable lesson time. Students who arrive late also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the student and can also encourage further absence.

How we manage lateness

- Parents/carers must give themselves reasonable time to get their child to the academy each day. It is busy every day on the roads around our academy and winter months can make a difference to travel times. Setting off a little earlier or arranging for transportation to collect your child earlier would ensure that the student arrives at the academy on time and avoids sanctions for being late.
- The academy doors open at 8.00am. Students should be in school by 8.25am and must be in their classrooms/lesson 1 venue ready to learn by 8.30am.
- If your child is late to the academy, they will receive a 30 minute same day detention.
- If your child arrives at the academy after 9:00am, they will automatically have been given an unauthorised absence mark for the morning session. Unauthorised absences can lead to prosecution of parents.
- If your child is persistently late, you will be asked to meet with the Head of Year, Progress Leader or the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer (APSO) to resolve the problem but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to the academy on time. If there is a continuing concern over lateness, then it will be referred to the APSO.

10. Leave of Absence during Term Time and Personal Circumstances

It is a government priority to improve school attendance and ensure schools tackle all forms of absences. The government takes attendance very seriously because there is clear evidence that any absence from school can and does impact on children's attainment. Absence in the weeks prior to tests or external examinations will disrupt revision and may affect your child's results.

Following amendments in 2013 to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Affordability of holidays will not be accepted as a valid reason for absence during term time. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

- Personal circumstances – parents are asked to inform the attendance officer in writing with supporting evidence. Where an authorised medical condition exists which prevents access to the school site, the school will endeavour to provide a range of support in order for learning to continue.
- Parents/Carers who wish to apply for a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances should write to the Headteacher as far in advance as possible, for their consideration. No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as a right. The decision of the head teacher is final.
- Where a student's absence is unauthorised, such as where a child is taken out on a leave of absence during term time without the school's permission, currently the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set out that each parent will be fined £60, which must be paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If the fine is not paid, parents/carers will be prosecuted. Unauthorised absence also places the child at risk of being removed from the school roll after 20 consecutive days of absence.
- Where parents continue to take unauthorised leave of absence, despite having previously been issued with a penalty notice, the Local Authority will consider a direct prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Castle Hall Academy and Children Missing Education (CME)

An Overview

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing education are at a significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET later in life. Therefore, effective information sharing between Castle Hall Academy staff, parents and the local authority is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education.

Schools and local authorities should focus their resources effectively in intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

Castle Hall Academy's Responsibilities

If a student fails to attend on an agreed date, the academy should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. The new Year 7 intake, in particular, is closely monitored and non-arrivals at the start of September – after reasonable enquiries - are referred to CME.

Castle Hall Academy monitors all students' attendance through their daily register on SIMS. We will inform the local authority (APSO) of the details of students who fail to attend regularly, or have missed school days without permission. Castle Hall Academy monitors attendance closely and addresses poor or irregular attendance. It is important that students' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

At Castle Hall Academy, we have a diligent pastoral, attendance and behaviour support team who work closely with our Attendance and Pupil Support Officer from Kirklees Council and referrals of those pupils whose attendance is, or potentially is, a cause for concern are regularly made.

Where a student has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive days, the student can be removed from the admission register when the school and CME – after an official completed referral - have failed after jointly making reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. (This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause).

Parents are asked to complete a leave of absence form should they require leave of absence for their child during term-time. If a request is rejected, the parents/carers are warned, in writing, that more than twenty days' absence could result in the pupil being removed from the school register. Parents wanting to take their child abroad or on holiday in the UK need to provide **copies of the family's travel itinerary and tickets – inbound and outbound journeys**. Parents of those students – who suddenly 'disappear' from school and return to their home country are contacted immediately by telephone by the Safeguarding Officer and home visits are done as an immediate follow up to try and ascertain the students' exact whereabouts. This is carried out the Safeguarding Officer, Head of Year and the APSO.

Letters are written to the family warning that more than twenty days' absence could result in the student being removed from the register. These letters, as well as an official referral, are forwarded onto CME after the twentieth day of absence and after the student has been taken off roll.

All schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their students, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Unexplained absences are always investigated thoroughly. It is important that all students' basic details and contact information is accurate and kept up to date. Although this is done officially on an annual basis, Castle Hall Academy also regularly encourages parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur. This assists both the academy and local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

When a parent of a student notifies the academy that the student is, or will be in the future, registered at another school, the school records the name of the new school and the start date. This is then verified by the Safeguarding Officer with a phone call to the new school. The Academy notifies the local authority when a student's name is to be removed from the admission register, as soon as the grounds for removal are met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. The Safeguarding Officer will ring the new school and confirm attendance on the first day they are due to go on roll. If a student leaves the UK to go to a school abroad, academy staff will ring the new school or the family themselves to make sure the student is safely where they said they would be.

All schools are required to notify the local authority within five days when a student's name is added to the admission register. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

When the whereabouts of a child is unclear or unknown, it is reasonable to expect that we will complete and record one or more of the following actions:

- Make contact with the parent, relatives, neighbours using known contact details
- Home visits made by appropriate staff, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbours, landlords and relatives and other stakeholders who are involved
- Letters – mainly warning parents that unauthorised leave of absence could result in a pupil being taken off the admissions register
- Check with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive, and so Castle Hall Academy (and the LA) should treat each case on its individual merits and use their judgement, ensuring they have taken into account all of the facts of the case. Making these enquiries may not always lead to establishing the location of the child, but will provide a steer on what action should be taken next. Castle Hall Academy records that we have completed these procedures.

Removal from the register

A student’s name can only be removed from the admission register if we and the local authority have failed to establish the student’s whereabouts after jointly making reasonable enquiries.

If there is evidence to suggest the child has moved to a different local authority area, Castle Hall Academy will contact the named person in the new authority using secure communication methods. The local authority should maintain a record of the child’s details until they are located or attain school leaving age.

Where a parent/carer notifies the academy in writing that they are home educating, Castle Hall Academy must inform the local authority and take the child’s name off the school’s register. Our APSO will always be involved in this process.

First Day Contact Procedures followed by Castle Hall Academy

Action	Staff member
1) Class registers completed and saved	Teachers
2) Late children checked against registers if recorded separately	Safeguarding Officer/ Admin Support
3) Absence calls listened to/attendance emails checked	Safeguarding Officer/ Admin Support

4) First day text (InTouch) sent to first name on contact list within an hour of school start time asking for response. Follow up calls made – priority vulnerable students.	Safeguarding Officer/ Admin Support
5) If no reply send second text and email to first contact on list stating that the child is absent and the school are unaware of their whereabouts as no response	Safeguarding Officer/ Admin Support
6) If known also try child's own phone number	Safeguarding Officer
7) Alert HT/DSL that this child is absent and no response has been received	Safeguarding Officer. HOY DSL distribution list including SLT.
8) HT/DSL to risk assess the current level of concern and consider whether circumstances warrant a home visit.	HOYs/SLT (PBK/SJN)
9) Home visit to be made following decision at 9-30am, where possible by school staff or any other agency involved with the child. Decision made whether to contact external services including police by DSL/HT.	HOYs in liaison with SLT DSL.
10) If no response by the end of the day, ring down contact list until reply is received stating that the child has not been in school all day and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence if no response from parent is received	Safeguarding Officer
11) If child does not present in school on second day, there has been no contact received from any of the contacts and the child's whereabouts are still unknown, the Safeguarding Officer and APSO will decide whether to make a home visit.	Safeguarding Officer, HOYs in liaison with SLT /DSL