



# **Castle Park Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy**

## 1. Mission statement

Castle Park Primary is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcomed and are committed to the fundamental principle that early intervention is crucial in ensuring the attendance, protection and wellbeing of all children. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and pupils. It is recognised that the earlier the intervention, the more likely it is that a positive outcome will be achieved.

The school will follow the All Wales Child Safeguarding procedures and local protocols in relation to specific and identifiable wellbeing issues that prevent a child from accessing education, or where there are safeguarding concerns.

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Good attendance in school can make a big difference to a child's future. **EVERY MOMENT IN SCHOOL COUNTS AND DAYS MISSED ADD UP QUICKLY.**

Welsh Government defines persistent absence as pupils whose absence level is more than 10% (less than 90% attendance).

School attendance is subject to education law and guidance and our school attendance policy is written to reflect this legislation and the guidance produced by the Welsh Government. For information relating to this legislation and guidance, see *Appendix 1*.

The legislation makes provision for a school day which is to be divided into two sessions with a lunch break in the middle and to be available for 190 days in any school year. Registration will take place at the start of the morning session and following lunch break.

## 2. Promoting attendance

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them, both now and in the future. We will use a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual pupils and assist to overcome any barriers that may be preventing the expected level of attendance. These strategies may be school-based or may be implemented jointly with other partners to ensure the most appropriate support for the individual and their family.

The home school agreement contains our expectations of what the parents/carers, the school and the pupils need to do to ensure good attendance is achieved. These expectations and potential consequences of not meeting the expectations will be regularly communicated to parents throughout the academic year in various ways such as Schoop, the school website, newsletters and at parents' evenings.

## 3. School procedures

- Register is marked twice a day, with the appropriate code
- School to initiate a first-day response to parent/carer via phone call or in some cases email.
- When the absence remains an issue, school will make further contact with home via phone and/or email to raise attendance concerns.
- If required, also send written correspondence (letter 1) and/or, invite the parent/carer for a school meeting. This meeting will be to discuss the reasons for absence and to look at ways to support the family at improving the absences.
- School to action further correspondence (letter 2), should there be insufficient improvement with the attendance.
- All on-going absence concerns are reported to the Education Welfare Officer, during attendance meetings.
- As attendance improves, the school will continue to monitor.
- Action a referral to EWS for the following reasons:
  - On-going concerns.
  - No response or poor response from the parent/carer.
  - Parent/carer fails to fully engage.
  - School must continue to keep the EWO regularly updated with all absence concerns.
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This referral is a formal process involving the completion of appropriate forms. It is a significant escalation in the school's procedures for dealing with absence and is undertaken when criteria set by the local authority are met, usually including when absence is persistent. When such a referral is made to the EWS, all concerned should understand the significance of this step and that it begins legal processes that may lead to statutory interventions or sanctions.

#### **4. First day absence**

Parents/carers are reminded that they should contact the school by 9:00am if their child is not able to attend school on that day. Parents and carers must state the full reason for the child's non-attendance (not just "feeling unwell").

If a parent/carer does not contact the school, staff will endeavour to ascertain the specific reason for non-attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence. This will include a telephone call or an email.

#### **5. Categorisation of absence**

All pupils who are on role but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories:

- Authorised Absence
- Unauthorised Absence
- Approved Educational Activity

*Unauthorised absence* - These codes are for those sessions where pupils were absent and no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

*Authorised absence* - These codes are for those sessions where pupils are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid. Evidence may be requested to support the reason given (e.g. medical evidence, appointment cards, etc.)

*Approved educational activity* - These codes cover types of supervised educational activity undertaken off the school site but with the approval of the school and/or the LA, where the session has been supervised by an approved tutor.

### **Medical appointments:**

All schools will code absences 'M' as medical if sufficient evidence has been provided by the parent/carer. For extended medical absence or if there is any doubt about absence then an appointment card or letter will be requested.

## **6. Punctuality**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 9:00am. The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes from this start time, in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. In addition, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school, but before the end of the 30 minute registration period will be coded as late (L code).

In the event of continued late arrivals, the school will contact the parent by letter to inform them of the impact on their child's attendance. Should the pupil continue to arrive late for registration after being issued with this letter, the school will issue a second letter inviting the parent or carer to a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the barriers that are preventing punctual arrival and offer support where appropriate.

## **7. Continuing and frequent absence**

Within the school it is the responsibility of the class teacher to be aware of and bring attention to the Headteacher any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible. This may involve inviting the parents/carers and the pupil into school for a meeting. However, should this absence persist, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service when the attendance drops below 90% for the preceding six school weeks.

For unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in a school term (there are two sessions in a day, morning and afternoon), the local authority may issue a fixed penalty notice in accordance with the local authority's Code of Conduct.

## **8. Absence related to discrimination**

A pupil's absence from school may be due to bullying, which can take many forms and can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect, for example, ignoring a pupil or not talking to them. Some of this bullying may be discriminatory.

As a school, we will monitor and report all discriminatory incidents each term and if the reason for a pupil's absence is related to any of the above issues, we will take action to deal with the situation.

## **9. Holidays in term time**

Holidays during term time are actively discouraged as it negatively impacts on the pupil's ability to engage with the full curriculum. Parents and carers do not have the automatic right to withdraw their children from school for a family holiday and will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

The school will consider applications for holidays on an individual basis; parents and carers must apply in advance for permission for their child to take a holiday. Forms to request a leave of absence can be obtained from the school, either in paper copy from the school office or from the school website. The headteacher will consider the request and respond in writing within 5 school days to inform the parent or carer whether the request has been authorised. Subsequently, a parent or carer can make an informed decision whether they wish to pursue the absence in the knowledge of any potential consequences.

Schools can only agree to absence for a family holiday or trip if they believe there are special circumstances that warrant it. If a school agrees absence and the pupil goes on holiday or trip for 10 days or less, absence is authorised (use code H). If a school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on the holiday or trip, absence is unauthorised (Code G). If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is also recorded as unauthorised (Code G).

Parents and carers are advised that a fixed penalty notice may be issued by the local authority when permission for a holiday or leave of absence has not been authorised by the school. The local authority's Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices can be obtained from the local authority's website or the Education Welfare Service.

## **10. Fixed Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance at School**

The school may request the local authority to issue fixed penalty notices where a parent/carer has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. A penalty notice can be requested against one of the following criteria:

1. Where there is a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in the current term (these do not need to be consecutive) which may or may not include pupils who are persistently arriving after the close of the registration period (Recommended that registers be kept open for thirty minutes);
2. Where a parent(s)/carer(s) refuses to engage with a school in the interest of improving their child's school attendance levels;

3. Where a pupil is repeatedly caught truanting in public places during school hours (Police can request a penalty notice be issued for this offence);
4. Where a holiday in term time has been requested but has been unauthorised.

### **Schools to amend criteria above to agree with their code of conduct**

To comply with [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2013](#), Undy Primary school will operate in accordance with the local authority's Code of Conduct for fixed penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school. It remains the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise absences in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 attendance codes and supplementary guidance provided by the local authority.

Each pupil's absence will be considered on its own merits and if appropriate, a fixed penalty notice may be requested to encourage improved future attendance. If a pupil's attendance is significantly low, a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be considered as an alternative to requesting a penalty notice.

### **11. Reintegration**

The school will welcome back all pupils on return from an absence. This will include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work.

If the pupil has been absent for a considerable period of time, a reintegration plan may be introduced tailored to the needs of the individual.

### **12. Roles and responsibilities**

Castle Park Primary school is aware that ensuring regular school attendance is a demanding area of work that depends on establishing and utilising close working relationships between parents/carers, pupils, schools, the local authority and other professionals who work with children.

A key part of any successful working relationship is a clear understanding of each person's role and responsibilities, and as such the following sets out to clarify the roles and responsibilities for those people engaged with tackling absence issues.

*The Parent/Carer* - Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent/carer is responsible for ensuring that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to their child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school, alternative provision or by elective home education (the parent can choose to provide education for their child).

A pupil's punctuality is also a legal requirement and parents/carers of a pupil who is persistently late (after the close of the register) can also face legal proceedings. Sometimes, there are situations at home that may make it difficult for a pupil to arrive on time and as such due consideration is given to any help or assistance a family may need in these circumstances.

The School - Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important in order to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

The school has the responsibility to monitor individual attendance rates at least weekly and use their own intervention methods to tackle individual pupil attendance issues where the pupil's attendance rate is 90% or below.

Headteachers will be responsible for the strategic management of attendance across the school. They will scrutinise the data, monitor trends and patterns across cohort of pupils, and evaluate interventions for their impact and effectiveness and direct resources for the best possible outcome. The Headteacher will present the data to the Governing Body on a termly basis for scrutiny. The Headteacher will make the referrals to the Education Welfare Service.

Class Teachers will be responsible for completing the session registers fully and accurately during every registration. This practice ensures good safeguarding processes, enabling the school to know where every pupil is at the start of all sessions and for school clerks to commence the 'first day response' process if the pupil is not present. SIMS notes fields should be used to ensure that the additional details relating to the absence are captured and retained on file.

School Clerks will be responsible for the daily operational attendance duties. They will ensure that all registers have been completed by the classroom teachers on a daily basis and if not will escalate this to the Headteacher for action. They will undertake the 'first day response' on each morning for those pupils whose families have not made contact. They will collate the supporting evidence, and chase any outstanding forms, absence notes, holiday request forms etc.

In order to request a fixed penalty notice, the school will monitor the individual attendance patterns of their pupils. If trends are identified that match the criteria stated in the local authority's Code of Conduct, a school has the opportunity to make a formal request to the local authority to issue a penalty notice.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS)- The principal function of the Education Welfare Service is to improve attendance in all schools and alternative education provisions across the local authority by supporting pupils and their families to overcome their barriers to engagement.

The service provides support to schools, pupils and their families to ensure regular attendance and address any difficulties relating to absenteeism. The Education Welfare Service works collaboratively with a range of support services and agencies and provides an essential link between home and school to ensure that pupils benefit from the educational opportunities available to them.

### **13. Dual Registration**

Pupils who attend another school or unit will be dually registered at both venues. The enrolment status within the management information system (MIS) indicates the main place of education and which the subsidiary is. An example would be a pupil registered at this school but attending EOTAS provision or a pupil referral unit for certain days

each week. The main school will be whichever the child attends for more than 50% of their time. The other will be the subsidiary.

The school or provision where the child is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil’s attendance and chasing up non-attendance. School will liaise with the other education provider on a daily basis in order to identify pupils who are absent for the session and mark the register accordingly.

**14. Retention of records**

Computer registers are preserved as electronic back-up copies. Attendance regulations stipulate that attendance records should be retained for at least three years; however it is good practice to extend this period in line with the education record retention schedule.

**15. Register checks**

The local authority will formally check the school registers on a termly basis to ensure there is compliance with the national legislation. It should be noted that registers are legal documents, and it is an offence not to maintain accurate records.

**16. Strategic Action Plan**

The school will produce an action plan to show how the school will set about achieving its attendance targets. This will include the school’s aims for its vulnerable groups of learners, how it intends to close the gaps between the FSM and non-FSM pupils’ attendance, the operational management of attendance, the strategic management of attendance including the evaluation of impact of interventions etc.

**Pupil voice on attendance -**

All children have rights set out in the United Nations Convention on The Rights of the Child.

- **Article 28** — Children and young people have the right to education no matter who they are.
- **Article 29** — Children and young people have the right to an education that helps their mind, body and talents be the best they can.

This policy was written by Mrs Harriet Wadsworth September 2025

This policy was presented and accepted by the Governing Body in September 2025

Signed ..... (Chair person)

The staff and Governors were made aware of this policy in September 2025

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Legislation and guidance**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent means natural parents and includes any person who has parental responsibility or has day to day care of the child.

Section 444 1, 1(a) and (ZA) contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school or alternative provision arranged by the Local Authority.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 set out the framework for the operation of the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme.

The Equalities Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

### **Registers and admission.**

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006

### **Attendance targets**

- The Education (School Performance and Unauthorised Absence Targets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

### **Guidance documents relating to attendance**

- All Wales Child Safeguarding Procedures
- Keeping Learners safe
- Belonging, engaging and participating – Guidance on improving learner engagement and attendance
- The All Wales Attendance Framework
- The National Assembly for Wales Circular 47/2006 Inclusion and Pupil Support.
- Consortium's Attendance Strategy
- Local Code of Conduct relating to the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme

- Welsh Government Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school
- Welsh Government Guidance on attendance codes