



**Castle Hill School**

# **Pupil Attendance Policy**

<b>Policy Created</b>	2013
<b>Signed off Last review</b>	2017
<b>Review frequency</b>	3 years
<b>Date to be reviewed</b>	2020

**ATTENDANCE POLICY - Castle Hill School**

## **General Policy Statement**

At Castle Hill School we intend to provide a safe, secure, caring environment where everyone is valued and respected equally. We aim to provide an inclusive education where children develop independent learning skills and are taught according to need whatever their age, gender, background, beliefs or abilities.

National legislation re disabilities, race relations and special education needs underpin this policy, which has also taken into consideration national, local and school policies on Special Educational Needs, Gifted and Talented, Equal Opportunities and Health and Safety.

### **Aims**

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education to facilitate learning
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

### **Parents' responsibilities**

If a pupil is prevented from attending school because of sickness or another unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the pupil's nonattendance on the first day of absence. It should be noted that a message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act states;

"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence".

### **Term time holidays**

Amendments to The Education Regulations 2006 remove references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Requests for any term time holidays should be made to the headteacher using the attached form (Appendix 1). The form should be returned to school at least 14 days before the start of the holiday. A response will then be sent to the parents/carers as soon as possible indicating whether leave has been granted and the number of days allocated.

In considering the decision whether to authorise a holiday in term time the following **will** be taken into consideration;

- reasons given for the holiday
- the time of year /term
- child's review date
- clinic appointments and assessment dates

In considering the decision whether to authorise a holiday in term time the following **will not** be taken into consideration;

- availability of cheap holidays
- availability of desired accommodation
- poor weather experienced in school holidays
- overlap with the beginning or end of term

Note: If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance and parents take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. In the case of unauthorised holiday the school is instructed to notify the Behaviour and Attendance Service of the holiday taken and a penalty notice may be issued. Any child taking more than 10 unauthorised absences will be removed from the school roll.

## **Penalty Notices**

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school.

Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days. Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from **1 September 2013**, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

## **School's responsibilities**

All the staff at Castle Hill School will provide an ethos which places a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

School staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by:

- ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately
- ensuring contact with parents and carers is achieved on the first day of a child's absence
- responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care
- contacting parents when they are concerned about a pupil's absences, and recording the contact
- consulting with the Education Welfare Service and Social Services if a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern
- differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absences



**(Appendix 1)**

**APPLICATION BY PARENTS/CARERS FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME.**

If you consider you have to take a leave of absence in term time, and that you have exceptional circumstances, please complete this form and return to the school at least 14 days before the date you wish to remove your child from school.

Guidelines from the DfE state that schools should **not** take in to consideration:

- availability of cheap holidays
- availability of desired accommodation
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- overlap with the beginning or end of term
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Pupil name ..... Class .....

First day of absence ..... Date return to school .....

Total number of days missed .....

**Exceptional reasons for absence**

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**I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the Behaviour & Attendance Service will be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice could be issued for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days which increases to £120 if paid within the 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this may result in legal action.**

Name of Parent/Carer making application .....

Signed ..... Dated .....

(Please ensure you are giving at least 14 days' notice of the proposed absence)

Pupil Name ..... Class .....

<b>Authorised</b>	<b>Your request has been authorised for the following dates:</b>
<b>Unauthorised</b>	<b>Your request for leave has not been authorised because:</b>

Signed..... Date .....



Castle Hill School

Dear Parents/Carers

You are probably aware from items in the media that there have been changes in the legislation regarding children's absences from September 1<sup>st</sup> this year. Schools are under constant pressure to ensure high attendance and as an 'Outstanding' school we must achieve above 97% + attendance rate. Whilst we understand and sympathise with reasons for taking term time holidays the law and Education Department guidance is very clear.

The Department for Education states that a headteacher must not grant a holiday in term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. If you consider that your request for a holiday is exceptional you will now need to complete the form attached. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance and you nevertheless take your child out of school for a holiday the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

**In the case of an unauthorised holiday we are instructed to notify the Behaviour and Attendance Service of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice could be issued for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 for each parent per child if paid within 21 days which increases to £120 if paid within 28 days. Thereafter the Penalty remains unpaid this may result in legal action. Any child taking more than ten unauthorised schools days leave will be removed from the school roll.**

All holiday requests must be completed on the attached form. This should be returned to the school at least 14 days before the start of the holiday.

In considering the decision whether to authorise the following will be taken into account:

- reasons given for the holiday
- the time of the year/term
- whether you will miss your child's review
- whether your child will miss any clinic appointments/assessments etc
- your child's previous attendance record

Please note we cannot take into consideration the cost of the holiday during term time. I hope you will support our efforts to ensure the continuing level of progress for all our pupils.

Yours sincerely

Steve Perren and the Governing Body at Castle Hill School