



CASTLEMAN ACADEMY TRUST

POLICY :

Attendance of Pupils

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Please note that this policy is one of the suite of CAT Policies for School Standards Boards to acknowledge.

CASTLEMAN ACADEMY TRUST

Attendance of Pupils Policy

Our policies refer to Senior Leaders. This can mean the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of School.

Why is regular attendance so vital?

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and low achievement. In primary schools less than 65% of children achieve good results in English and Maths with an average of 15 days absence a year compared to almost 90% where the average is less than 8 days. Parents can be very surprised at how quickly their children can accumulate 15 days absence within a year.

If children do not attend school regularly they may:

- Struggle to keep up with school work. In a busy school day it is difficult for schools to find the extra time to help a child catch up.
- Miss out on the social side of school life. Poor attendance can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships; a vital part of growing up.
- Research has also shown that children who are not in school can become vulnerable. For example, children who play truant are more likely to be drawn into crime than those who do not.

We want the children in Castleman Academy Trust schools to have the best possible life chances, so we will do all that we can to encourage attendance of well above 95%.

First Day Absences

Any phone calls regarding absence are on school systems.

Parents must ring in before 9.30am, at the very latest, on the first day of their child's absence from school. Children's absences must be written on the daily '**Absentee Log**'. If a parent has not phoned the school by this time then by law, the school must contact the parent to ascertain the reason for absence. Schools may require parents to inform them on every day of absence. The First Day Absence Log must be completed, recording our actions and the reasons given by the parent for the absence. If we cannot contact the parent and they do not phone the school back before 9.30am, the School may choose to carry out a welfare check or request a welfare call be made to home by the attendance workers/Police.

If children leave school during the day, other than on a school trip, their name must be reported on the daily '**Absentee Log Sheet**' noting the time they left school and the reason why. Similarly, if children are late into school, this must also be noted in the daily '**Pupils Late Log**' stating the time they arrived at school and the reason for the lateness. School specific consequences may be put in place for pupils who are repeatedly late to school.

When a child returns to school after any absence, a letter should be sent by the parent/guardian confirming the reason for absence. This is then filed within the pupil's admissions folder. The Management Information System (MIS) is updated on a daily basis, for both morning and afternoon

registration. This enables access to many types of information – trends, particular age groups, numbers of any particular type of absence etc.

The school monitors attendance and this is also carried out by Local Authority Officers. If we have a concern about attendance and/or lateness, we will use the following to inform parents about their child's attendance.

- Concerns about lateness
- Letter of concern (children below 95%)
- Invitation to attend a meeting with the Local Authority Officer.

Lateness

Parents should make sure children are in school by the start time.

If a child is late, they **must** report to the office, so that the registers can be updated.

Penalty Notices

It is an offence if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school where they are registered and the parents are at risk of prosecution unless absences have been authorised. As an alternative to prosecution, parents may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Fine (£60) which is issued under Local Authority guidance and is payable to the local authority. This can only be issued by a Senior Leader or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head authorised by a Senior Leader), a local authority officer or the police. Following amendments to regulations, which came into effect on 01/09/2013, each parent will be fined £60 each for each child if the parents allow the child to take unauthorised leave within term time. The regulations make it clear that the Headteacher/Head of School may only grant leave of absence in term time under "exceptional circumstances". The definition of parent, includes all biological parents, whether they are married or not and includes any person who, although not a biological parent, has the parental responsibility and/or any person who, although not a biological parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent.

Fines will be issued under the discretion of Senior Leaders.

Penalties may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

Appointments during the day

Parents should avoid arranging appointments for their child during the day, wherever possible. However, if this is unavoidable, please telephone or send a note giving details of the appointment. When collecting children for an appointment, parents should bring a copy of the appointment card or letter. Children should only be taken out of school for **their own** appointments. Siblings will not be excused because another family member etc as an appointment.

Leave during term time

The Department for Education, in 2013, stated that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances AND current attendance is at least 95%. An example of exceptional circumstances may be that a family member is returning home from service duty in term time. There is now no such thing as a 'holiday request form'. Requesting Leave of Absence must be done in writing to the Headteacher/Head of School, but will only be considered under **exceptional circumstances**. It is impossible to present an exhaustive list of exceptional circumstances. Individual cases will be considered.

If leave of absence is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised. If the overall attendance level continues to be below expected standards, parents may be subject to a fixed-penalty notice.

The Law

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1st September 2013. Guidance is updated regularly by the DfE, the most recent being May 2022.

Amendments remove previous references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments also reduce timescales for paying a penalty notice from 28 days to 21 days. Our Attendance Policy has been amended to reflect the changes to the 2013 Law.

Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been reviewed with the equality impact considerations as laid down in the Trust's Equality Policy.