

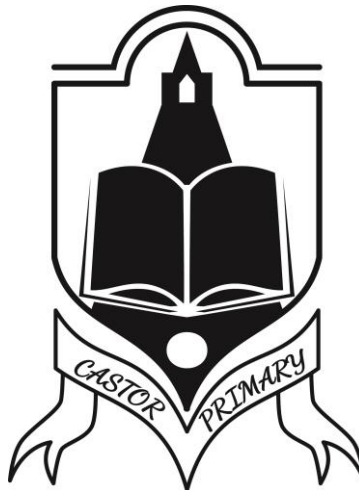
## Castor Church of England Primary School

**Policy Name:** Attendance Policy

**Committee Responsible for Policy:** Full Governing Body

**Policy written by:** Headteacher

Based on model policy from Peterborough City Council



**Date presented to staff:** October 2019 (staff briefing)

**Date approved by Governors:** October 2019

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Review Date:** October 2021

**Where:** website, relevant to staff induction, school network – Staff > Policies

Equality Act Statement:

1. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender (including issues of transgender, and of maternity and pregnancy), religion and belief, and sexual identity.
2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
3. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Our Attendance policy is underpinned by our Christian vision:

***“We have faith in God, ourselves and everyone around us”***

Jesus said, ‘if you believe, you will see the glory of God’ (John Ch 11 vs 40). He also gave his disciples a new commandment - to ‘love one another’ (John Ch13 vs 34). Yet still, “The apostles said to the Lord ‘increase our faith”’ (Luke Ch17 vs5).

Castor Church of England Primary School will be a place where all are encouraged to search for signs of God’s glory and, in so doing, people’s faith will be increased, and they will have the grace to follow Jesus’ commandment to love one another.

### **Our School Values**



Our Christian values permeate all aspects of school life and we encourage the children to live these out in all that they do, with all children having the opportunity to flourish as children of God.

### **Introduction**

Castor Church of England Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of its pupils/students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based upon the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to identify everyone’s part in this.

Ours is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.

All staff (teaching and support) at our school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all of our pupils/students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

### **Attendance Leader**

A member of our staff will direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils/students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body termly. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### **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 pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

#### **Safeguarding:**

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, 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 school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

#### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you details on attendance in our newsletters;

- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
- Celebrate and reward good attendance;

### **The Law relating to attendance:**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

### *The Law relating to safeguarding*

*Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.*

### **Reception Intake Induction period**

PCC, in line with the Admissions Code, offer all children in the September following their fourth birthday a full time place at school if requested by the parents/carers.

Our School uses an induction period where Reception aged children are introduced to their formal education by the use of a reduced timetable and to assist in their transition to full-time education. You will be notified of the timetable for our Reception children for September in advance.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

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

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other exceptional cause.

**Unauthorised** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after 9:15am);
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional circumstance;
- Medical / dental absences where no written (e.g. appointment card or letter) or electronic (email or text message) evidence has been provided to the school

This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council, School Attendance Team, using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better 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 make things worse.

### **Persistent Absence (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parental support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and we may also combine this with academic support where absence affects attainment.

### **Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the School:**

A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a minimum period of any 8 school weeks (A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year);
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive school days (4 consecutive sessions);
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or above
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification;
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible **on the first day of absence;**
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with us;
- Send a letter informing you of our concern
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of Penalty Notices issued to each parent/carer for each child.

### **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. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **The School Attendance Officer:**

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council, School Attendance Team. S/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court

### **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher/form tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for your child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8:55am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked **by 9:05am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9:15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that will indicate that your child is in the school building, but will be marked with a 'U' Code which is recorded as an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child is late and it is for a genuine reason, e.g. a medical appointment, they will receive an late code (code L) if they arrive before 50% of the morning or afternoon session has passed. After 50% of the time has passed, they will receive an absent mark, but this will be classed as an authorized medical absence.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Leave of Absence:**

Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstance in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence **must** be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

It is important that you understand that we may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances**.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

### **Deletions from Register**

Under Section 8.-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of absence the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and

(i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any exceptional cause;

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote good school attendance. The school also has a duty of care towards all children, and for safeguarding reasons, will follow up unexplained absences.

Equally, parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend school regularly. Parents must ensure that school is notified if their child is not able to attend, and that evidence is supplied for medical and other absences.

All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.