



Castle Newnham School

TRADITIONAL VALUES, BRIGHT FUTURES, ONE JOURNEY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Governors' Committee:	Curriculum & Standards
Adopted by the Governing Body on:	February 2019
Signed: (Chair of Committee)	
Signed: (Federation Principal)	
Proposed date of review:	February 2020

Glossary of terms:

EWO – Education Welfare Officer

EWS – Education Welfare Service

PFST – Pupil and Family Support Team

NM – Nik Maund (Vice Principal – Pastoral)

JB – Jim Balmbra (Primary Headteacher)

A. RATIONALE

Our purpose is to support the individual needs of the student. We offer a safe and caring environment supported by an enthusiastic team of professionals. Working in partnership with families, we enable students to lead successful lives and be useful and protective members of society.

We believe that we can improve the life chances of all pupils by ensuring that all staff, pupils and parent/carers are aware of the importance of and take responsibility for regular attendance.

B. AIM

At Castle Newnham School we believe that it is important to provide an environment in which:

1. Pupils are supported in reaching their potential in order that they can attain at the highest possible level.
2. Positive relationships are promoted.
3. Everyone has the right to feel safe.
4. The curriculum will be designed to reflect the interests and needs of the pupils ensuring engagement and enjoyment in their learning.
5. There is an expectation that good attendance is the key to success.
6. The monitoring and evaluating of individual attendance patterns supports the learning of individuals.

C. PRINCIPLES

We believe that pupils will want to attend regularly if they are in an environment which is caring and supportive and which promotes respect for all. Lessons are well planned, resourced and imaginative and are delivered with pace, providing opportunities for challenge and engagement and which meet pupil needs in terms of differentiation and learning styles. Good attendance is positively promoted as a vital part of individual wellbeing and success.

D. PROCESSES – PRIMARY AND SECONDARY

Responsibilities:

Pupils – it is expected that they will:

1. Attend school regularly.
2. Arrive at school on time for an 8.40am start (North site) / 8.55am start (South site). Any pupil arriving after these times will be deemed 'late' which will count as non-attendance.
3. Behave appropriately.
4. Arrive at lessons on time and remain committed to their learning.

Tutor/class teacher - in the first instance it is the responsibility of the tutor/class teacher to monitor attendance and make early interventions where necessary. Actions may include:

- a) Where appropriate, use fortnightly attendance data for their class/tutor groups, celebrate good attendance and, where relevant, discuss reasons for absence with pupils (particularly with secondary phase pupils).
- b) Discuss attendance issues with parents – either via telephone or in an informal meeting.
- c) Liaise with Attendance Administration Officers re: identified issues to ensure a collaborative approach.

d) Also see "Strategies for promoting good attendance" (Page 3/4).

Attendance Lead (NM/JB - in liaison with PFST):

1. Work with the Attendance Administration Officers and class teacher/tutors in the monitoring and early identification of attendance issues and where necessary in agreeing appropriate targets.
2. Liaise with external agencies as part of referral process (eg EWO, Social Services, CAMHS etc).
3. Liaise with EWS as appropriate and named EWO once every half term.
4. Liaise with Parents/carers as appropriate.
5. Where there is a sudden change in a pupil's attendance pattern or where attendance is persistently low, arrange a professionals meeting.
6. Arrange home visits to support parents/carers in improving attendance.
7. Devise and implement a range of strategies to support pupil attendance e.g. identifying alternative curriculum opportunities, look at timetable, weekly meetings, pastoral support, meet and greet.
8. Ensure that a termly attendance report is provided for the curriculum and standards committee of the governing body.

Attendance Administration Officers:

1. Complete daily register sheets.
2. Contact parents/carers in the event of a pupil absence where a reason has not been provided.
3. Analyse the data once every two weeks to identify issues and use in meeting with EWO.
4. Print off tutor group attendance register and distribute to appropriate form tutor fortnightly.
5. Print off the school attendance register and distribute to Federation Principal/SLT half termly.
6. Send praise and concern letters/communications to parent/carers.
7. Monitor attendance and trigger letters once pupils drop below agreed percentages.
8. Notify Attendance Leads when 'warning' letters are sent home.

Parents/Carers:

1. Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
2. Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their child is on time for school every day.
3. Appointments should be made outside of school time where possible.

When their child cannot attend, Parents/Carers should contact the school between 8.30 and 9am on the first day of absence to inform the school as to the reason for absence. The responsibility for authorising the absence lies with the school and not the parent/carer.

Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance:

As part of the general ethos of the school we encourage good attendance through praise and reward. Listed below are some of the successful individual strategies that we use. Some of these strategies will vary according to the stage that a pupil is in:

1. Praise letter/text sent home to parents reporting attendance percentage each term.
2. Tutor frequently raises profile of good attendance with individuals and groups.

3. Certificate awarded for a full term of good attendance – above 97%.
4. Certificate awarded for significant improvement in attendance.
5. Raising the profile of good attendance by setting targets for poor attendees.
6. EWS to action individual rewards where individuals have met agreed targets.
7. Early intervention with parents when attendance is falling/low.
8. Attendance will be an agenda item at relevant governors meeting in which a report will be prepared and discussed by the Federation Principal and Attendance Leads.

Procedures for non-Attendance:

1. Contact made with parent/carer on first day of non-attendance and recorded.
2. Daily monitoring of absence by Attendance Administration Officers and fortnightly analyses with Attendance Leads to determine patterns/trends, leading to appropriate actions (see above).
3. Fortnightly monitoring and analysis of whole school (site based) attendance by Attendance Lead and appropriate strategies deployed.
4. Parents/carers to be informed by Attendance Administration Officers as soon as concerns are identified with regard to attendance.
5. Timely referrals made to the EWS of attendance concerns i.e.:-
 - a) After insufficient explanation of absence to Attendance Administration Officers following tutor/class teacher interventions.
 - b) After one week of absence and where the Attendance Administration Officers has been unable to make appropriate interventions due to lack of cooperation from home.
 - c) On the third incomplete week of attendance.
 - d) If the parent informs the tutor/class teacher of school refusal.
7. Fixed term exclusions are kept to a minimum, but where they are necessary work is set for the period of exclusion.
8. Poor attendees have an attendance target that is set in liaison with parents (for older pupils this can be set between tutor and pupil in the first instance).
9. Other agencies e.g. Educational Psychology Services are used to support parents/carers to improve their child's attendance.

Authorising Absence (Including Holidays):

1. The school discourages the taking of holidays during term time as this has a detrimental effect on attainment and social inclusion.
2. Absence can only be authorised by the school and not by parent/carers.
3. If a parent applies to remove their child from school for a family holiday, the Federation Principal/Attendance Leads may, in **exceptional circumstances**, agree to the request from the parent and the absence will be authorised. If permission is not sought the absence will be unauthorised.
4. If parents intend on taking their child on a term time holiday, they must notify the school in sufficient time – at least 5 school days in advance.
5. If a parent removes a child from school for a family holiday, the school may seek to apply a Fixed Penalty Notice.
6. If a parent decides to take their child on an extended holiday, without informing the school, the school may consult with EWS and remove the child's name from the school register if the child has been missing for 20 school days or more.

Reintegration procedures following long term absence:

- a) When a pupil returns to their education at Castle Newnham School, an individual integration programme is devised for them. It is expected that the majority of pupils will be attending full time within three weeks.
- b) Any pupil experiencing a prolonged illness will be provided with work, or referred to the Medical Needs Team, whichever is appropriate.
- c) The Attendance Administration Officers and Attendance Leads will devise and implement a range of strategies to secure improved attendance e.g. identifying alternative curriculum opportunities.

Fixed Penalty Notices:

A pre-referral will be arranged in circumstances of parentally condoned unauthorised absence where the parent:

1. Is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance; and
2. Is not willing to take responsibility for doing so.
3. If this is unsuccessful a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.
4. Normally, a parent will receive a warning letter before the Fixed Penalty Notice is issued for a first offence.
5. Fixed Penalty Notices will only be used when all other intervention has failed.
6. Following school interventions, a Formal Warning Letter may be issued by The Education Welfare Officer if attendance does not improve.

Formal Warning Letters:

The letter formally:

1. Notes the concerns that school and the Education Welfare Service have about the pupil's irregular attendance.
2. Reminds the parent/carer of their responsibilities under the Education Act 1996 to ensure their child's regular school attendance.
3. Informs the parent/carer that the school will not authorise any future absences as medical, unless they receive a GP letter explaining the reason for the absence.
4. The warning letter remains in force for six months from the date it was written and will be copied to the school.

Parenting Contracts:

Section 19 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows schools and Local Education Authorities to enter into voluntary "Parenting Contracts" with parents when their child is truanting.

A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent/carer and either the Governing Body of the school or the Local Education Authority which could be suggested at a pre-referral meeting. The contract should contain:

1. A statement by the parent that they agree to comply for a specified period with the requirements specified in the contract.
2. A statement by the Governing Body or Local Education Authority agreeing to provide support to the parent for the purpose of complying with the contract.

Castle Newnham School supports parents in any way they can, to assist in improving their child's attendance. However, up until now we have not used a formal written contract, if it is deemed appropriate they will be used in the future.

E. MONITORING, ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

The policy will be monitored with a whole school attendance target set with the named EWO at the beginning of every academic year.

The Policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body.