

Attendance Policy

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| Policy Number | EDE/POL/005 | Issue Date | 01/09/2025 |
| Issue Number | 006 | Author | Nicola Kelly |
| School | Castle Hill School | Approver | James Madine |
| Headteacher | Andrew McCreedy | Executive Headteacher/ Regional Director | David Joy |

1. Introduction

This Attendance Policy reflects Keys Group’s EPIC values of Excellence, Passion, Integrity, Caring as well as the Keys Connect approach, which emphasises relational, trauma-informed practices tailored to support pupils with complex needs and attendance challenges.

Keys Group schools are committed to working in partnership with pupils and families to promote and support high levels of attendance. In line with the Department for Education’s statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (updated August 2024), our approach prioritises early intervention, relationship-building, and understanding the barriers to attendance. We recognise that improving attendance is not solely a compliance issue but a collaborative effort rooted in pastoral care, wellbeing, and inclusive practice. Our schools consistently demonstrate strong engagement with families and pupils, and we aim to build on this strength by ensuring that support is proactive, respectful, and tailored to individual needs. Attendance is monitored rigorously, and strategies are implemented to address persistent or severe absence, always with the goal of re-engaging learners and fostering a culture where every day in school counts.

The policy complies with Part 3, paragraph 15 of the Independent School Standards 2014 (as amended), and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. It recognises the unique barriers faced by many of our pupils, including historical trauma and ongoing challenges, and commits to a personalised, empathetic approach to attendance improvement.

While our aspiration is for all pupils to achieve 100% attendance, we pursue this goal sensitively and realistically, recognising that many pupils join us with persistent absence patterns.

2. Policy Aims

At Castle Hill School, we aim to ensure that every pupil:

- Feels safe, secure, and well cared for within the school community.
- Fully participates in school life, enjoying and achieving their potential.
- Feels valued and trusts staff to safeguard their wellbeing.
- Receives support tailored to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Understands the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

3. Roles and Responsibilities



| Role | Name |
|---|-----------------|
| Governing Body (Chair) | James Madine |
| Regional Executive Headteacher/Director | David Joy |
| Head Teacher | Andrew McCreedy |
| School Attendance Leader | Angie Bossons |
| Daily Attendance Contact | Angie Bossons |

4. Reporting Absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of absence before the school day starts via Arbor in app message or phone (01782 284392). Arrangements for longer absences will be agreed as needed.

Parents/carers needing support with attendance should contact Angie Bossons via phone or email.

5. Registration and Lateness

- Registration is taken twice daily (AM: 09:00 PM: 12:00)
- Pupils arriving within 30 minutes after registration are marked late (Code L).
- Pupils arriving after 30 minutes are marked absent (Code U or equivalent).
- Persistent lateness linked to transport or external factors will be addressed collaboratively with families, transport providers, and local authorities.

6. Categorisation of Absence

Authorised absences include:-

- Genuine illness
- Emergency medical/dental appointments (evidence will be requested)
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes

Unauthorised absences include:-

- Family holidays
- Shopping trips
- Birthdays
- Caring for family members
- Transport unavailability

7. Attendance Monitoring and Intervention

- Attendance is benchmarked on admission and monitored daily using Arbor data.
- Patterns of absence are analysed to identify pupils or cohorts needing support.



- Attendance improvement meetings are held fortnightly to review data and progress against plans.
- Positive attendance is recognised with rewards and certificates.
- Pupils with attendance concerns receive personalised Attendance Support Plans developed collaboratively with families.
- Home visits and safe and well checks are conducted for unexplained absences, especially for pupils known to social care.
- Multi-agency collaboration is maintained to support attendance improvement.

8. Safeguarding and Children Missing in Education (CME)

- Unexplained absences trigger safe and well checks, including unannounced home visits where necessary.
- The school collaborates with social care and other agencies to safeguard pupils.
- The Local Authority is notified of pupils missing from education as per statutory guidance.
- The school cooperates fully with local authority procedures regarding CME.

9. Legal Framework

- The school adheres to the National Framework for Penalty Notices where applicable, including the new statutory guidance effective from August 2024.
- Parents have legal duties to ensure regular attendance under sections 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, with penalties including fines and possible prosecution.
- The school will work with local authorities to enforce attendance where voluntary support fails.
- Penalty Notices require a preceding 'Notice to Improve' and follow the prescribed fine schedule (£80 within 21 days, £160 within 28 days).

10. Parental Responsibilities

Parents/carers must:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Report absences promptly with reasons.
- Update the school daily during ongoing absences unless agreed otherwise.
- Request leave for exceptional circumstances in advance.
- Provide evidence for planned medical appointments.
- Work collaboratively with the school and other agencies to resolve attendance barriers.



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11. Training and Equality



- Staff receive training on attendance policy and its links to safeguarding.
- The policy is implemented with sensitivity to diversity and individual pupil needs.
- Any concerns regarding equality impact should be raised with line management for appropriate action.



Appendix A – Tiers of Intervention around Attendance

| Attendance Tier | Identifying Factor | Potential Strategies |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Expected attendance is maintained | Pupil consistently meets their expected attendance target | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebrate through positive points or rewards - Continue regular monitoring |
| 2. Expected attendance is not consistently maintained | Patterns of poor attendance identified through data analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss barriers with pupil and parents/carers - Develop and agree an Attendance Support Plan - Monitor progress for minimum 4 weeks - Engage external support if needed (e.g. Early Help) |
| 3. Attendance is not improving / lack of engagement | Persistent absence despite support and engagement efforts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formalise support with attendance contract - Clearly explain consequences - Continue multi-agency collaboration |
| 4. Enforcement | All support avenues exhausted, no improvement or engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issue Penalty Notice in line with National Framework - Consider prosecution to protect pupil's right to education |



Appendix B – Attendance Management Plan (Stages)

| Stage | Description | Actions |
|---------|--|--|
| Stage 1 | Attendance falls below target | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send letter to parent/carer informing of concern - Explain impact of low attendance |
| Stage 2 | Continued absence and decline after Stage 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send Stage 2 letter - Arrange home visit or virtual meeting to discuss attendance and create plan |
| Stage 3 | Further absence after Stage 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite parents for attendance meeting - Review Attendance Support Plan - Explain possible escalation |
| Stage 4 | Unauthorised absences continue after Stage 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issue Penalty Notice Warning letter (Headteacher authorised) - Liaise with Local Authority Attendance Team |
| Stage 5 | Persistent absence despite penalty notice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Request Local Authority to consider prosecution - Continue multi-agency support |



Appendix C – Common Attendance Codes (DfE Guidance Summary)

| Code | Description | Usage |
|--|--|--|
| /\ | Present (AM or PM) | Pupil is present in school |
| L | Late – before register closes | Pupil arrives after start of session but before register closes |
| U | Unauthorised absence (late after register closes) | Pupil arrives after register closes |
| O | Unauthorised absence | Pupil is not present in school for an unauthorised reason |
| I | Illness | Authorised absence due to illness |
| M | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence for medical reasons (evidence may be requested) |
| C2 | Other authorised circumstances | Authorised absence for other exceptional circumstances |
| N | No reason yet provided | Absence not yet explained |
| X | Non-compulsory school aged pupil not required to attend school | Post 16 pupil whose timetable does not require them to attend |
| Y4 | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed. | Adverse weather |
| <p>The full range of possible register codes and guidance for their application is available in Working together to improve school attendance (2024)</p> | | |

Appendix D – Sample Attendance Improvement Plan

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Pupil Name: | |
| Year group: | |
| Date: | |
| Present Attendance % | |
| Authorised Attendance % | |
| Unauthorised Attendance % | |

Attendance Concerns:

- Briefly describe the current attendance challenges (e.g., overall attendance rate, persistent absenteeism, specific groups affected).
- Explain why improving attendance is important for pupil outcomes and school performance.

Objectives:

- Specific: What exact attendance issues will be addressed? (e.g., reduce persistent absenteeism by 10%)
- Measurable: How will progress be measured? (e.g., attendance data analysis)
- Achievable: Are the targets realistic given resources and context?
- Relevant: Do the targets align with broader school improvement goals?
- Time-bound: What is the timeframe for achieving these targets? (e.g., by end of the academic year)

Key Actions and Strategies:

| Action | Responsibility | Resources Needed | Timeline | Success Indicator |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Regular monitoring and analysis of attendance data | Attendance Officer/SLT | Attendance software, data reports | Weekly/ Monthly | Accurate reports produced on time |
| Early identification and intervention for pupils at risk of poor attendance | Pastoral Team | Pupil records, parent contact details | Ongoing | Reduction in persistent absenteeism |
| Engage families through communication and support | Attendance Officer | Communication templates, | Ongoing | Increased parental engagement |



| | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---|
| Implementing Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) strategies to improve pupil wellbeing | Behaviour Support Team | PBS training materials | Termly review | Improved pupil behaviour and attendance |
| Provide targeted support for vulnerable groups | SENCO/DSL | Specialist support services | Termly | Improved attendance in targeted groups |
| Attendance incentives and recognition programs | School Leadership | Rewards budget | Termly | Increased attendance rates |

Support and Training:

- Outline any staff training related to attendance monitoring, PBS, or family engagement.
- Identify coaching or mentoring support for staff managing attendance issues.

Monitor and Review:

- Describe how progress will be monitored (e.g., attendance data reviews, pupil interviews).
- Set dates for formal review meetings.
- Define who will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on progress

Communication Plan:

- Details on how attendance targets and progress will be communicated to staff, pupils, and parents.
- Include plans for celebrating improvements and addressing ongoing challenges.

Actions Required:

Example target: Increase overall pupil attendance from 92% to 95% by July 2026 through targeted interventions and family engagement

| By Student | By Parent/Carer | By School |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|
| [Action] | [Action] | [Action] |
| | | |

Signatures:



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Pupil/Parent: _____ Date: _____



Staff Member: _____ Date: _____