



Castlebar School Attendance Policy

Ratified by Governing Body: Summer
2020

To be reviewed: Spring 2022

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Registration.....	3
3. Reporting Absences	3
4. Monitoring.....	4
5. The School Attendance Team (Assistant Head Teachers and SSW).....	4
6. Persistent Non-Attendance.....	4
7. Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments	4
8. Lateness	4
9. Term Time Absence/Leave.....	4
10. Traveller Children	5
11. Interviews and Examinations.....	5
12. Absence for Performance Purposes	5
13. Off-Site Tuition	5
14. Partnership with Parents/Carers	5
Appendix 1 – Attendance Letter Template	6
Appendix 2 – Attendance Procedure Outline	7
Appendix 3 - Full school opening September 2020 (COVID provision).....	8

1. Introduction

Punctual and regular attendance is crucial to the success of all pupils and the smooth organisation of the curriculum. Lateness disrupts the whole class, and irregular attendance undermines the educational process, leading to educational disadvantage.

Unjustified occasional absence, arranged and condoned by parents, gives the wrong message to the child about the importance and value of school, and raises an inappropriate expectation that the Class Teacher will distort their whole class planning and practice to compensate a single child.

It is the policy of the school to encourage full attendance for every child, except in cases of illness or unavoidable occasional absence, and to give a very clear message to parents that unjustified absence is not appropriate and will not be compensated for.

Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children attend school, and are punctual. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.

2. Registration

The Class Teacher will complete the register using SIMS online registration by 9:10 each morning. Late arrival will be indicated on the register by an 'L' and the number of minutes late after 9am may be recorded. Children arriving late are expected to be brought to the main office. Where the reason for lateness is known or where the pupil is consistently late the comment box will need to be completed.

Class Staff concerned about continued lateness will consult the relevant Assistant Headteacher or SSW (School Social Worker) to decide on further action.

Reasons for pupil absence should be indicated by selection of the appropriate letter on the online register (e.g. 'I' for illness).

3. Reporting Absences

It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of the reasons for a child's absence as soon as possible. Parental contact on the day of absence is the expectation. Parents should ring the school by no later than 9.00 am on the day of absence. It is not acceptable for a message to be passed via the passenger assistant.

If a pupil is absent and no reason has been received from the parent/carer, then class staff are to phone home in the first instance. Contact with primary parent carer should be effected as soon as possible, then secondary parent (unless there is a prohibition against contacting the secondary carer) and if the school is unable to reach the parent or carer, they will need to call the emergency contact. Where a teacher has any concerns about parental contact they will record this on My Concern as soon as possible.

The school administrator has responsibility for monitoring absence and will liaise with the class base to ascertain reasons for absence and to provide support where required. The administrator provides reports as necessary to the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) regarding pupil absence. Half termly absence figures are produced by the Administrator and these are shared with the SLT, SSW and the Governors Pupil and Parents Committee.

4. Monitoring

The teaching and non-teaching staff will monitor attendance through registration and will inform the office if a persistent non-attender is absent. In all cases, if there is not a message, class based staff will telephone the home for an explanation.

5. The School Attendance Team (Assistant Head Teachers and SSW)

LAs are charged in law with enforcing school attendance for pupils of compulsory school age.

The school attendance team is responsible for monitoring attendance. The attendance team will check the attendance reports at the end of every half term and will follow up any concerns with class staff and parents as necessary.

6. Persistent Non-Attendance

Recent DfE guidance has defined Persistent Non-Attendance as pupils with below 90% attendance. It is therefore contingent upon the school to very vigilantly monitor and act on these episodes.

Please refer to Appendix 1 & 2 to see outlined procedures employed by the school to tackle issues relating to attendance.

Teachers (and AH's) will closely monitor any pupils with Persistent Absence. They may, where necessary, send work home to ensure all efforts are made to support progress.

7. Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments

Absence through illness will be recorded as authorised. However, evidence may be requested.

Where possible medical appointments should be booked after school or during school holidays. If this is not possible, children are expected to attend before or after the appointment. Where there is excessive/continuous absence, the attendance team may request proof of medical appointments and/or illness. The team may also request that the parent/guardian obtain medical certificates to explain continued absences.

8. Lateness

School starts at 9 am and finishes at 3.10 pm. All pupils are expected to arrive on time and parents/carers should make every effort to support this happening. Travel assistance issues and difficulties are not reasons in themselves for lateness.

The reason for repeated lateness will be sought from parents/carers by the Class Teacher. The school is sympathetic to family circumstances, but punctuality will be encouraged even where there are difficulties. It is especially important in difficult family circumstances that the child's daily routine is disrupted as little as possible. Lateness disrupts not only the child's education and routine but also that of the other children. Coach delays resulting in lateness do not incur a late mark.

9. Term Time Absence/Leave

Statutory guidelines make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Any request for time off will need to be made in writing prior to making travelling arrangements or taking leave and the Local Authority may issue fines.

10. Traveller Children

The special position of traveller children is acknowledged by the Education Act. In summary however a special absence code can only be entered for this group if indeed they are travelling for 'occupational purposes'. Travel needs to be agreed by the school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

11. Interviews and Examinations

The school may authorise absence for the purpose of an interview or examination in preparation for secondary transfer, or for instrumental music exams.

The school will request, and expect, that the child will return to school following their interview or examination. Failure to return from a morning appointment will result in the afternoon absence being unauthorised.

12. Absence for Performance Purposes

The Headteacher may grant leave of absence for approved public performances, considering the following:

- the nature and purpose of the performance
- the frequency of absence requested, and the impact of such absence on the child's education, particularly in terms of continuity and the particular child's progress
- the overall attendance pattern of the child.

Where a child is paid for their performance, a licence must be obtained from the Local Authority, and absences will be monitored by the Headteacher to ensure that they comply with the permissions given in the licence.

13. Off-Site Tuition

Where a child's special needs are recognised by the school, and special tuition/therapy not available in school is required, the Headteacher may authorise absence for specific times when such tuition or therapy may be given outside school.

14. Partnership with Parents/Carers

The school values the support of parents in matters of attendance, and appropriate opportunities will be taken to state attendance policy. This will be on admission, at parents' meetings and in letters to parents.

A summary of this attendance policy can be found on the school website.

Castlebar School

April 2020

RATIFIED BY THE GOVERNING BODY ON: 13th May 2020

REVIEW DATE: February 2021

Appendix 1 – Attendance Letter Template



Hathaway Gardens
Ealing
London
W13 0DH

T: 020 8998 3135

F: 020 8810 7597

E: admin@castlebar.ealing.sch.uk

W: www.castlebar.ealing.sch.uk

London Borough of Ealing

Dear Parents/Carers

We are writing to inform you that **XXXXX's** attendance is currently **xx%** since the start of the academic year.

It is the expectation of the Ealing Local Education Authority that all children attend at least 95% of the time. We understand that sickness and medical appointments are unavoidable but you will need to ensure that other circumstances are not interfering with his/her attendance.

We fully understand that sometimes your child may become ill or there are other circumstances when your child cannot come to school, but every school has a legal requirement to maintain an attendance level and every parent/carer has a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school.

If your child's attendance continues to decline in the coming weeks, the School Social Worker or Assistant Head Teachers may be in contact with you to offer further support.

We are fully aware of the challenges placed on our parents at Castlebar School. Our aim is to support you as best as possible, to ensure your child receives the most from his or her education.

If you would like to discuss this matter with us please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Assistant Head Teacher

Head Teacher: Mr Paul Adair
Deputy Head Teacher: Miss Melanie Hogan
Assistant Head Teachers: Mr Alan Guy
Miss Louise Taylor and Miss Dawn Murphy



National Teaching School
designated by
National College for
Teaching & Leadership



Appendix 2 – Attendance Procedure Outline

- 1) The administration office will produce a weekly report on attendance for the management team and the School Social Worker. They will then liaise with the class teachers to clarify the reasons and nature of the absence.
- 2) Once a child's attendance falls below 92% (including authorised absences), the school will start communicating with the parents/carers.
- 3) Once a child's attendance falls to 90% (including authorised absences), a letter will automatically be sent to the parents/carers or a discussion will take place during a parents meeting.
- 4) If a pupil is off for more than one week at a time or if their attendance falls below 90% in any academic year, the school will seek to work with the parents/carers to improve attendance which may include a home visit.
- 5) Progress of pupils with persistent absence is monitored and, where necessary, work will be sent home to ensure all efforts are made to support progress.
- 6) If there is no improvement in the proceeding 6 weeks, the Assistant Head Teachers or the School Social Worker will contact the parent/carer to further examine the causes for the decline in attendance and determine if the school can offer support to ensure the child's attendance improves.
- 7) Parents and Carers of children with attendance concerns may be asked to work in conjunction with the Attendance Team. This will likely involve an attendance contract that will outline measures to be taken to improve attendance.
- 8) Depending on the circumstance, the School Social Worker or other school professional may make a home visit to offer parents support.
- 9) If there is a high volume of absenteeism due to medical purposes, a doctor's note or appointment slip may be required.
- 10) The same procedure listed above may apply to children who are consistently late for school.
- 11) If the situation arises in which there is persistent absenteeism and the explanations for the absences are not seen to be satisfactory, advice will be sought from an Education Welfare Officer within the Local Authority. In some cases, this may result in a fine and in extreme situations this may result in legal action.

Appendix 3 - Full school opening September 2020 (COVID provision)

This document does not replace our existing **Attendance Policy** which can be found on our website at www.castlebar.ealing.sch.uk but it outlines our attendance procedures for the period of school re-opening from September 2020 until matters are reviewed in January 2021

**Please refer to DfE guidance at the end of this document for information on vulnerability, shielding and quarantine requirements*

SCHOOL NAME: Castlebar School

Background

In March 2020 when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, we made clear that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed, and it is vital for **all children** to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. **School Attendance** will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the Autumn Term in September 2020. This means from that point, we welcome your child back into school and the usual rules on **School Attendance** will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with Local Authorities' codes of conduct

Who can't be in school?

No one with symptoms should attend school for any reason. If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable, the school will discuss individual cases with parents as necessary.

Communication within school

Any calls from parents regarding a pupil not attending school due to sickness will be directed straight to a member of the Senior Leadership team. The member of the SLT will gather information and give guidance to the parent in accordance with Government guidelines. The SLT member will then send an email to other members of SLT and the office.

Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating

We now know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school. However:

- A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August 2020, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Read the [current advice on shielding](#)

- Where you and your child have been delayed in returning to the UK during the lock-down period or travelling abroad and have been told to remain at home, you should not attend school during the period of quarantine. Please discuss such circumstances with the school and provide documentary evidence in support of absence; the school will consider the circumstances of the trip/time abroad to inform their decision to authorise absence or not. Current advice on [travel corridors](#)
- If rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore, they may be temporarily absent.
- Some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school. You can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health at [COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance for children and young people](#).

Where a child is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will offer access to remote education. We will monitor engagement with this activity to ensure learning is being accessed appropriately. This may also apply to some pupils with EHCP plans.

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

All other pupils must attend school.

Pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies and where the absence has been **authorised** (for example: the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, has been told to quarantine, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc.).

We understand that some pupils, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes. This may also include some pupils with EHCP plans.

If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, please discuss your concerns with us so that we can understand your situation and reassure you of the measures we have in place to reduce the risk in school. The school may contact the SEND and School Nursing Teams for advice and support and may require medical verification or other relevant documentation from you in order to assess risk.

Punctuality

Some groups of children may be given staggered start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. Where this is the case, you will be informed. Staggered start and finish times will not reduce the amount of overall teaching time each child receives. Please ensure your child arrives on time and is collected on time in order to minimise disruption in line with the school's Covid risk management. Please contact the school ahead if you are experiencing difficulties. *If lateness persists, the school will want to discuss this with you and agree some support measures; if matters do not improve, the lateness will **not be authorised** and the matter may be referred to the Local Authority **School Attendance Service**, who may invite you to agree a Parenting Contract.*

Please refer to our 'drop off and collection' arrangements and **be aware that the gathering of parents at the school gates and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed.**

Management of non-attendance:

Families should notify their school as normal if your child is unable to attend on any given day and update the school regularly regarding on-going absence.

Where a child is not regularly attending the school, we will want to discuss this with you to understand what the difficulties are and agree with you some supportive measures to improve matters as early as possible. We will follow our normal absence procedures to establish the reasons for absence (please refer to our main Attendance Policy found on our website at.....) Where our efforts do not result in an improvement in attendance or time keeping, we will refer to the local authority School Attendance Service for additional support, advice and ultimately enforcement.

Referrals to the Local Authority

- All unauthorised absence, including significant lateness is reported to the Local Authority School Attendance Service to offer additional advice and support to parents as necessary. Where unauthorised absence is frequent and or persistent, sanctions will be imposed to include warnings, penalty notices, prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.
- Where a child or family is away from home including abroad, and unable to return home, parents are expected to provide the school with detailed information as to the whereabouts, reasons for travel and estimated return dates and we will do our best to support you. Where the school is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence will not be authorised, and this could result in Fixed Penalty Fine (please refer to our main Attendance Policy). Please be aware that leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.
- Where the school is unable to contact a child/family over a 3-day period, they will contact the School Attendance Service to carry out enquiries to try to locate them. A home visit will also be undertaken.
- Where the school and the Attendance Service have failed to locate the child/family within 10 days, the child will be referred to the **LA Children Missing Education Officer (CME officer)** who will undertake additional checks with other agencies to locate them, including consultation with social care, the police, health and housing. Where these enquiries do not lead to confirmation of the child's whereabouts, the matter will remain open to that service who will widen their enquiries. In these circumstances, the school cannot guarantee to keep a school place open for your child.

Is attendance compulsory?

Yes. However, anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. You can use this link: [arrange to have a test](#). Tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.

If you or anyone in your household displays symptoms e.g. high temperature, persistent cough or loss of taste/smell, please inform the school immediately and do not come into school. Returning to school is contingent upon a negative test result for both yourself and everyone in your household, or the self-isolation period has expired without any onset of symptoms.

Parents must inform school immediately of any test results.

- If someone tests positive, they should follow the 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection' and must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of

smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 7-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

Safeguarding

If at any time the school are concerned for a child's safety or welfare from any year group, we will consult with Ealing Social Care in line with our Child Protection Procedures.

*Link to DfE Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>