



# Castle Donington College

## Pupil Attendance Policy

**Date ratified and adopted by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee of the Governing Board**

**23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020**

**Date for review**

**October 2023**

**Signed by Chair of Committee**

*This College follows Guidance and Advice given by the Government and Local Authority when writing policies; in light of this, changes may need to be made after the adoption of this policy and prior to the review date.*

## **Section A: Introduction**

### **Aims**

At Castle Donington College we aim for pupils and staff to enjoy learning, experience success and develop their full potential.

The aim of the Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and staff.

### **Principles**

There is a clear link between poor attendance at the College and lower academic achievement. If children attend the College regularly and punctually, they will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities the College provides.

This policy has been updated to reflect the government guidance published in August 2020. (School Attendance – guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities)

### **Objectives**

1. To provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance and punctuality.
2. To recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and work with parents and the College to address these.
3. To encourage pupils to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by attending the College regularly.

### **Equality Impact Statement**

This policy will help to ensure that the College fulfils its duty to:

- eliminate discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity between pupils who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not
- foster good relations between pupils who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not

There are strategies to reintegrate long-term non-attenders and excluded pupils, which address the needs of all pupils.

We make provision for leave of absence for religious observance, for staff as well as pupils.

We monitor attendance by gender, ethnicity and special educational need. Action is taken in order to address any disparities between different groups of pupils.

The College will fully support children with long-term medical needs who may have an erratic attendance because they are in and out of hospital.

## **Section B: Practice at Castle Donington College**

### **a) Attendance**

Form tutors mark the register during morning and afternoon registration (Period 4). The register is closed at 9.30am and 2.00pm.

- Daily attendance is monitored by the Attendance and Welfare Officer
- Parents are asked to contact the College before 8.45am to explain any absence. There is an answerphone extension and email address to report absences
- Parents are contacted by the Attendance and Welfare Officer where pupils have failed to arrive by 9.15am and notice of their absence has not been received
- Authorisation of absence requires a written note, email or written record of a telephone conversation from parents/carers
- Unauthorised absences are followed up by either a phone call or a letter home
- Persistent absence is reported via Go4Schools or directly by the Attendance and Welfare Officer to the Head of Year for further action
- Pupils will be routinely spoken to about their attendance by Head of Year, their form tutor, Assistant Principal or external Education Welfare Officer where there is a cause for concern. This contact is logged on G4S or on CPOMS if there is a safeguarding concern.
- If attendance continues to fall, the College contacts home in order to put a plan in place to support the home and the pupil to attend; this may involve outside agencies including the College Education Welfare Officer
- Pupils who have 100% attendance will have their names entered into a raffle for a chance to win a prize at the end of each term and will be issued with a Certificate to take home
- Attendance reports are issued to parents with termly progress reports; these can be seen on Go4Schools
- In severe cases of persistent absence, a multi-agency meeting will be called and an action plan put in place monitored by the Head of Year and other relevant parties

### **b) Punctuality**

Pupils are expected to be in College by 8.45am for the register

- Pupils who arrive before 8.45am must be signed in on the Early Morning Register at Reception so we know who is on site; this will be done by the duty receptionist
- If pupils arrive after 8.45am they should sign in at Reception
- Pupils who arrive after 8.45 have their names taken and parents are contacted by text to alert them they are late
- Persistent offenders face consequences on a sliding scale. The Attendance and Welfare Officer passes information to Heads of Year and the Behaviour Manager to action. The Attendance and Welfare Officer, may, in addition, send letters home informing of the number of late attendances and the possible consequences

### **c) Long Term Absence**

- When pupils are absent, or likely to be absent, for more than one week on medical grounds and where they are still able to undertake school assignments, work will be set and monitored by staff using the Satchel One system. On return to the College, the pupil will be fully supported. The Head of Year will organise and oversee the support.
- In cases where extensive absence is accrued through intermittent absence, work will be set and monitored by staff using the Satchel One system.

- In accordance with Local Authority Policy, family holidays are not authorised during term time.

## **Section C: Roles and Responsibilities**

### **College Leaders (including the Governing Board) will:**

- ensure all legal requirements are met
- ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and act early to address patterns of absence
- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole
- ensure parents perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at the College attend regularly
- support parents in ensuring punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and pupils
- implement a clear and consistently applied Attendance Policy and procedures
- ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken if appropriate
- respond promptly to requests for absence
- be involved in all decisions regarding referrals to the EWO

### **The Form Tutor will:**

- mark the register in silence during the registration period ensuring that each name is called and ensuring the expected response of “Yes, Mrs .... or Mr ....”
- return any notes regarding absence to the Attendance and Welfare Officer
- monitor attendance and punctuality of pupils in the tutor group
- discuss attendance issues/ concerns with the pupil
- inform the Head of Year of any attendance concerns

### **The Subject Teacher will:**

- take a lesson register promptly in silence ensuring that each name is called and ensuring the expected response of “Yes, Mrs .... Or Mr ....”
- inform the Head of Year of any attendance concerns
- ensure that missed work is caught up

### **The Head of Year will:**

- review attendance of their year group weekly
- review Persistent Absence list weekly and take action as appropriate to improve attendance
- meet regularly with the Attendance and Welfare Officer to discuss action with regards to pupils whose attendance falls below 96%
- ensure contact with home and other relevant agencies is made where there are attendance concerns
- supervise detentions for punctuality concerns as appropriate
- organise and oversee the support for pupils who have been on long term absence
- report at the RAB meeting on attendance and punctuality for the year group each half term
- liaise closely with the EWO and recommend pupils to be referred

### **The Attendance and Welfare Officer will:**

- identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the College's electronic register (Go4Schools)
- support Senior Leaders, Heads of Year and the external Education Welfare Officer with appropriate attendance reports
- contact home on a pupil's first day of absence if this has not been explained satisfactorily
- ensure that 'N' codes are cleared within three working days
- if the reason for absence is still not confirmed after 2 days, further contact will be made. If parents do not respond, the absence will be coded as unauthorised
- work with form tutors, Heads of Year, SLT and EWO to follow up absences and address concerns with pupils and agree on strategies to improve attendance
- liaise regularly with the Assistant Principal, responsible for Attendance and Punctuality, to discuss attendance issues

### **The Role and Responsibilities of Parents and Carers**

Parents are responsible in law (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996) for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Failure to do so without legitimate reason is an offence.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children:

- attend and stay at College
- arrive at College on time, in correct uniform and ready to learn
- have an appreciation of the importance of attending College regularly

We expect parents to:

- to work in partnership with the College to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- ensure that they are aware of the Attendance Policy of the College
- to ensure that their child attend daily and on time
- to contact the College on each day of absence before 9.30 am to explain any absence
- to avoid medical and other appointments during College hours
- to avoid holidays during term time
- to inform the Principal, well in advance, of any absence which needs to be taken in term time

### **The Role and Responsibilities of Pupils**

We expect pupils at Castle Donington College to:

- attend the College and all of their lessons regularly and punctually
- hand any communication giving reasons for absence to the relevant person
- not leave the College without permission

## **Section D: Authorising Absence**

**Authorised Absence** means that the College has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

**Unauthorised Absence** from College is when the College is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

An application for a holiday in term time must be made, in advance, to the Principal who must be satisfied that there are exceptional/special circumstances in order to authorise the holiday. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion and is not a parental right.

### **Penalty Notices**

Penalty notices with fines of £60/£120 could be imposed on parents for failing to ensure that their child regularly attends the College. They will be issued by the Principal or someone authorised by the Principal (the Vice Principal, Assistant Principal or EWO through the Local Authority).

Penalties can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the College. Penalties may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during College hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the College at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

## **Section E: Promoting Good Attendance**

At Castle Donington College we work hard to ensure pupils attend every day. We do this in a number of ways, some of which are outlined below:

- by providing a warm, caring environment where all pupils are valued
- by ensuring teaching matches the needs of all pupils
- by establishing positive relationships between pupils and teachers
- by building strong and positive links with parents
- by clear communication with parents to what is and what is not an acceptable absence
- implementing interviews with parents to discuss individual needs and concerns for non-attenders
- by collecting and analysing the views of all pupils are listened to and valued
- by providing a wide range of extra-curricular activities
- by ensuring a robust system to monitor attendance and lateness
- by celebrating good attendance through a reward system for all and recognizing good attendance r weekly, termly and annually
- ensuring an ethos that encourages being a good citizen and caring for each other
- by building a strong sense of community where pupils respect each other and report bullying
- by ensuring early intervention for low attendance
- by building strong links with outside agencies that supports inclusion
- ensuring any attendance issues are communicated regularly to parents via website and newsletters

Good attendance is rewarded at Castle Donington College in the following ways:

- weekly, for 100% tutor group attendance
- termly, for individual attendance over 95% and highest attending tutor group in each year
- yearly for attendance over 95% and highest attending tutor group in each year
- termly raffle
- 100% (or very close!) attendance over 4 years

## **Section F: Whole College monitoring of attendance**

Attendance at Castle Donington College is monitored in the following ways:

- weekly, between Assistant Principal and Attendance and Welfare Officer
- weekly, at HOY/Year briefing and SLT meetings
- weekly at RAB Meetings
- termly, in the Principal's Report to the Governing Board
- termly, to parents and carers in progress Reports
- regularly, at the Loughborough Inclusion Partnership

## Appendix A: Absence Codes

### Codes used by College teaching staff:

| Status  | Registration Code |
|---|-------------------|
| Present in College during registration              | / = am \ = pm     |
| Late arrival before the register has closed (09.30) | Code L            |
| Reason for absence not yet provided                 | Code N            |

### Additional codes used by the Attendance and Welfare Officer

#### Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

#### Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

#### Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

#### Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

#### Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

### Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

#### Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should

not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

#### **Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment**

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

#### **Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment**

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

#### **Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity**

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

#### **Code V: Educational visit or trip**

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

#### **Code W: Work experience**

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

#### **Authorised Absence from School**

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

## **Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:**

### **Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

### **Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made**

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

### **Code H: Holiday authorised by the school**

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

### **Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)**

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

### **Code M: Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

### **Code R: Religious observance**

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

### **Code S: Study leave**

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

### **Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main 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.

### **Unauthorised Absence from School**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

#### **Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.**

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

#### **Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided**

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

#### **Code O: Absent from school without authorisation**

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

#### **Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed**

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

### **Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

For the school year 2020 to 2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

### **Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

(This code is not counted as an absence in the school census)

This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

- guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care<sup>12</sup> or
- any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Schools should also continue to use code X to record when a pupil not of compulsory school age is not expected to attend as detailed below.

### **Administrative Codes**

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.

#### **Code X: Not required to be in school**

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

#### **Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances**

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

#### **Code Z: Pupil not on admission register**

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

#### **Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure**

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.