



CASTLE MEAD
ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the academy. The Academy Council will review the policy annually, unless there are significant legislative changes in the interim period.

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance of scholars at school is both a legal requirement and essential for scholars to maximise the opportunities available to them. Missing out on education severely affects young people's chances.

The school believes that parents or carers and the wider community all have a role to play in improving attendance. We aim to make first day contact with parents or carers where a scholar is absent without known reason, and work closely with the Education Welfare Service in ensuring that appropriate support is offered to families of scholars with persistent poor attendance and punctuality.

To be read in conjunction with the school's Exceptional Pupil Leave, Behaviour Management and Pastoral Support policies, and also the following documents:

Penalty Notices under Section 23 (1) Anti-Social behaviour Act 2003 and S444A & S444B Education Act 1996 for unauthorised absence

The Role of Scholars:

Scholars have a responsibility to understand the importance of good attendance, both the legal requirements and the correlation between good attendance and achievement levels. This is communicated to scholars in assemblies, tutor times and individually if persistently absent.

The Role of Parents and Carers:

Parents or carers have the legal responsibility to make sure their child attends school regularly. They are expected to:

- Make sure their child understands how important it is to attend school regularly and that parents or carers do not approve of them missing school unless they are genuinely ill
- Make sure their child gets to school on time
- Take an active interest in their child's school work
- Speak to the relevant Head of Year if their child makes excuses to try to avoid going to school
- Wherever possible make sure you make appointments for your child (e.g. dental check-ups) outside of school hours

In addition, they should:

- Contact the school before 9.30am each day their child is absent
- Let the school know of any changes to your contact details, including mobile telephone numbers and email addresses

SchoolComms:

Parents or carers are alerted if their child is absent from school without reason, through our SchoolComms automatic texting system.

Attendance Legislation:

Parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at their school. Failing to do so could result in:

- A Penalty Notice being issued: this is a fine of £60 per parent per child (which rises to £120 if not paid within 28 days). A Penalty Notice can be issued in the following circumstances:
 - Where a child has 20 unauthorised absences or more during a 12week period.
 - Where a child has been found to be truanting on two or more Truancy Patrols (these joint Police and Education Welfare Patrols take place around the city throughout the year).
 - Where a child has unauthorised absence from school in relation to a holiday that the school has not agreed to.

Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court which could lead to a fine of up to £2,500 per parent per child, a jail sentence of up to three months or a community sentence. It could also lead to a parent being ordered by the court to attend a Parenting Course.

It is the school's decision whether or not to authorise a child's absence.

The school will base the decision on the information a parent or carer provides and may decide that the absence should be unauthorised.

The issue of Penalty Notices will be administered by the Education Welfare Service to ensure compliance with the Regulations. With certain exceptions, parents or carers will receive a warning letter before a Penalty Notice is issued. The letter will indicate the period of time over which improvement is expected (usually 15 days) and the failure of ensure regular attendance.

The Role of the School:

The school aims to make contact with home if a parent or carer has not already contacted the school to explain the reason for their child's absence from school. Where there are difficulties that are affecting a scholar's attendance or punctuality, the school will work with the Education Welfare Service to provide appropriate support to the young person and their family.

In order to authorise ongoing absence we are advised by the welfare service to request medical evidence. This can be in the form of an appointment confirmation, a prescription or an empty prescribed medication box and if the doctor feels appropriate they may wish to put this in writing, but we do not expect parents to pay for a medical letter.

We ask parents and carers to contact us if there are any issues or concerns that they feel we can resolve as a school to improve their child's attendance.