

9th November 2021

Attendance

Dear Parents and Friends of Castle Hill,

As you are probably aware, mandatory school attendance continues to be a major government focus and the recently appointed education minister has urged schools and parents to ensure that children are in school.

Why is attendance so important?

When looking at the future attainment of children with poor attendance, it is clear why good attendance is vital:

For pupils that miss between 10% and 20% of school (80-90 % attendance):

- Only **35%** manage to achieve 5 GCSEs including English & Maths (c grade or above/4 or above) compared to **73% of pupils with over 95% attendance.**
- Only **66%** of pupils achieved the required standard (ARE) at KS2 SATs (English & Maths) compared to **87% of pupils with over 95% attendance.**

(Every Day Counts, DfE (2011))

- **An attendance rate of 90%, over the course of an academic year, is the equivalent of missing a month of school time.**

How do we track attendance?

We are passionate about ensuring your child receives the best education in order for them to thrive in future life, which is why we aim for 100% attendance from all our pupils. Obviously, there are genuine times when this is not possible, so we closely track attendance that falls below 95%. If your child is off with COVID-related symptoms, then this does not impact on their attendance figures.

We track:

- Daily attendance (each day has 2 sessions)
- Punctuality – persistent lateness means that the child loses valuable learning time at the start of the day

How can you support us?

We really value your support in ensuring pupils high attendance by:

- Sending in a message to school on EACH day that your child is not in school with the reason for absence
- Respond to phone calls from our admin team relating to unexplained absence
- Providing medical evidence if your child is going to be too unwell to attend school for an extended period, more than 5 days

When should you be keeping your child off school?

Most illnesses are classed as minor and your child should continue to come to school. Some useful points to remember are:

- **Children do not need to be kept off school for a cold, a sore throat or tonsillitis** (unless they are accompanied by any of the COVID-19 symptoms)
- **A child with a rash should not be sent to school.** This could be the first sign of an infectious disease. Always check with your GP before sending them to school.
- **With cases of vomiting or diarrhoea, students should stay off school for 48 hours before returning.**
- A child with COVID-19 symptoms should be kept off until they have a negative PCR (see COVID-19 guidance)

How will you be contacted if we have concerns about attendance?

The table below provides a summary of the routine key steps that we take to ensure high rates of attendance and to reduce persistent absenteeism.

% Attendance	Support Level	Action
ALL	Standard	Admin team contact parents by 10am if an absence has not been explained
95-98%	Class teacher support	Class teacher to phone home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss attendance with parents and carers • Agree strategies to support improved attendance. • Daily check in with student after period of absence e.g. attendance report.
92-95%	Head of Year support	Head of Year (HOY) will contact home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advising that student is close to becoming a persistent absentee (PA) • agree strategies to support improved attendance Class teacher to continue to support the student daily.
Less than 92%	Pastoral Team Support	The following steps are put in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral Lead to arrange a meeting to put in support • Admin Team contact Hampshire LICO for advice, where applicable, this information is shared with family • Catch up meetings are put in place to improve attendance • Formal letters relating to low attendance and legal implications sent to family HOY to continue routine dialogue with family.
Less than 90%	Attendance Team involvement (Pastoral Team, Inclusions Lead and Deputy Head Teacher)	The Attendance Team meets half termly and the following steps are triggered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal attendance meeting with family (DHT/Inclusions Lead) • Detailed attendance plans to be agreed with timescales and review • Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices and/or referral to Attendance Legal Panel as appropriate*

** In Hampshire, a Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within a period of 100 school sessions (90% attendance) and should be issued as soon as possible after the last unauthorised absence (the 10th) to allow time for the legal process to be completed.*

Can you request absence for other reasons apart from illness?

- Schools should not authorise absence for holidays in term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances ('exceptional' is defined as 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short')
- Compassionate leave can be requested (e.g. for a family funeral), but this is at the discretion of the headteacher.
- Only a maximum of 5 days can be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances, and this is at the discretion of the headteacher
- Leave of absence for family celebrations or holidays will not be authorised

For more information on attendance and penalty notices, please refer to the attached documents which can also be found on our website:

1. Good School Attendance Guide
2. Every day counts
3. Information Booklet for parents on Penalty Notices

<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/code-of-conduct-issuing-penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence-fromschools.pdf>

We hope that this letter helps explain why your child attending school is so important and the importance of us working together to prevent absence becoming an issue.

If you have any questions or concerns, then please speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance. I should like to thank you for your continued support



Yours sincerely

John DF Martin & The CHPS Team