



Castle Tower School

Attendance Policy

Date Ratified by Board of Governors	February 2025
Review Date	February 2027

Castle Tower welcomes pupils aged 3-19 who face a wide range of barriers to learning. Educational opportunities are provided within our Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Post 16 departments.

Our Vision

Vision:

To be a leading light in special education through educating, nurturing and inspiring all our school community.

Mission:

Castle Tower School is committed to creating a community which:

- Ensures everyone is safe and included
- Always learns
- Promotes independence and resilience
- Celebrates achievements
- Looks forward with hope to the future

Everything we do is driven by our core values:

- Child-centred
- Nurturing
- Fun
- Team work
- Inclusive
- Independence

Our Ethos

Castle Tower strives to create a caring community in which every member feels valued, supported and happy. All staff work to maintain an ethos in which fairness, tolerance, compassion and forgiveness permeate all relationships within the school community. High standards of respect, self-discipline, commitment and sensitivity are sought and everyone is encouraged to set and achieve the highest personal, academic and social goals. The safety, welfare and development of everyone in our school community is of paramount importance to all staff and Governors.

At Castle Tower, there is continued development of the quality of the teaching and learning environment. Resources are used efficiently. Opportunities are created for learning in co-operative and interactive settings. Pupils are presented with challenging as well as stimulating teaching and learning opportunities. Staff at Castle Tower seek close working relationships with other providers and services throughout each stage of our pupil's education and through the transition stage to further education and life after school.

Introduction

Regular school attendance is crucial to ensuring that every child has full access to the school curriculum and support services and to their reaching their full potential.

Castle Tower will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Aims of the Attendance Policy

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils in Castle Tower School.
2. To develop a framework that defines the roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/carers and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal of Castle Tower School has the overall responsibility for school attendance.

The Directors of Pastoral Care (DPC) have day to day responsibility for monitoring attendance and liaising with the Education Welfare Service (EWS), including specialist LAC Services.

Teachers should mark roles diligently, using the appropriate coding.

Teachers have the responsibility to bring any concerns regarding school attendance to the attention of the DPCs. In particular, school staff have a responsibility to inform the DPCs on the absence of a pupil on the Child protection Register. School staff also have a responsibility to talk to pupils, at an appropriate level, about their attendance and the importance of regular attendance. In particular, pupils reaching Key Stage 4/5 who are leaving school for training and /or work placements should have the importance of regular attendance as part of their careers lessons.

Administration staff have the responsibility to enter all pupil attendances using the Attendance Module. Attendance under 85% each week is emailed to the Director of Pastoral Care every week.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance during safeguarding meetings.

Dissemination of the policy

A copy of the policy will be on Microsoft Teams and the School website. Parents / carers may request a copy from the school.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or in the event of a significant change in legislation.

To enable Castle Tower School to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way, we will adhere to the guidance provided in Department of Education Circular 2017/15.

Parents / Carers

Castle Tower School is committed to working with parents / carers to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Parents / carers have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

If a child is registered in a school, their parent/carer have a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend school.

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note on SeeSaw / phone call to class teacher. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to the school to allow for any necessary arrangements to be made.

Pupils are expected to be in school on time. As the majority of the pupils at Castle Tower School are transported to school by transport provided by EANI, parents/carers are obliged to ensure that their child is ready at the collection time which will have been pre-arranged. Parents who make their own arrangements for bringing their child to school have the responsibility of ensuring that it is done in a timely manner.

If a child is reluctant to attend school, parents/carers should discuss this matter with the child's class teacher in the first instance, to ensure that the maximum support can be given.

Absence procedures, including procedures for managing non-attendance

Where possible, appointments with doctors, dentists etc should be made after school hours or during periods of school closure. Where this is unavoidable, pupils should attend before and/or after the appointment when possible. The school should be notified in such a case. Castle Tower School discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be considered to be "unauthorised absence".

The DPCs will hold regular meetings with the schools' link Education Welfare Officer for the purpose of reviewing the attendance of pupils who fall into the below 85% category. At these meetings, consideration will be given to the individual circumstances of the pupils under discussion and decisions will be taken as to whether a letter, expressing concern about the pupils' attendance, will be sent home. Should such a letter be sent, the child's attendance will be reviewed at the next meeting and, should there be no improvement and no satisfactory explanation, a further letter will be sent, requesting a meeting with the parents/ carers. At all times, the focus is to support the pupils and their parents/carers to ensure good attendance by all our pupils.

In a case where there is no improvement after a second letter and a meeting, the school will make a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service and this service will support staff and parents/carers in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve attendance.

In Castle Tower School we recognise that a number of our pupils have additional medical needs and in some cases this may necessitate absences for appointments, procedures, hospitalisation and recuperation. In such cases, every effort will be made to facilitate appropriate learning opportunities for those pupils.