



**The Robert Carre Trust**

## **Attendance policy**

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## **1 Aim of this policy**

To support excellent levels of attendance for all students to enable fulfilment of their potential at the Robert Carre Trust schools

This policy has been prepared with regard to the Academy's statutory duties relating to attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance entitled Working together to improve school attendance (2024), which is referred to in this policy as the "DfE Attendance Guidance".

## **2 Key principles**

- High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted and rewarded.
- It is the responsibility of everybody in the Trust to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- Some students find it harder than others to attend school. The schools will work with students, parents and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents or students have should be discussed with the form tutor. Where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents and students should contact the relevant Head of Year.

## **3 Roles and responsibilities**

### **3.1 The Schools**

Each school will:

- develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance, through acknowledgement and reward.
- work with students and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance
- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate
- take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

- share information, including returns information required to be shared in accordance with regulations<sup>1</sup> and the DfE Attendance Guidance and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance
- regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify students or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future
- ensure that all students can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where there is evidence to suggest that this is not the case
- ensure that the Trust Board and School's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy
- ensure that all legislation and guidance is complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the non-statutory attendance guidance issued by the Department for Education, e.g., DfE Attendance Guidance
- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (please refer to our Safeguarding Policy, available on [www.robertcarretrust.uk/policies](http://www.robertcarretrust.uk/policies).)
- provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education
- regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels
- support students who are returning to education following long term absence
- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system
- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the school to a designated senior leader, known as the Senior Attendance Champion.
- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applicable from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/124222/summary-table-of-responsibilities-for-school-attendance-applicable-from-19-august-2024.pdf)) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

### **3.2 Parents and carers**

We expect parents and carers to:

- ensure that their child arrives at the school on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment

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<sup>1</sup> School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

- promote the importance of regular attendance at home
- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the school (see section 6.3 below)
- avoid unnecessary absences
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 6.5 below)
- contact the relevant Form Tutor or Head of Year if they notice issues arising at home related to school attendance
- inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live
- observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (applicable from 19 August 2024) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))

### **3.3 Students**

We expect students to:

- attend the school regularly and on time
- be punctual to all lessons
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the school late (see sections 4 and 5 below).

### **3.4 Senior Attendance Champion**

The Senior Attendance Champions at the schools are:

Carre's Grammar School - Hayley Goymer, Assistant Headteacher

Kesteven & Sleaford High School - Amy Kopsidas, Assistant Headteacher

The SAC has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the schools and will:

- set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and ensure that these are followed by all staff
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the Trust

- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and students
- provide data and reports to support the work of the board of trustees (see below).

### 3.5 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees will:

- take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the trust and schools' ethos and policies
- ensure the school's leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help School leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual students or cohorts who need it most
- ensure staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support students or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance
- share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its schools
- require the school to report to the trustees on the schools' attendance at regular intervals

## 4 Registration

- 4.1 The schools maintain an attendance register and use these to record each student's attendance at the start of the school day and at the start of each period. In the morning the registration session is 08.50 45 to 09.05.

Registration session	Start time	End time
Morning	08.45	09.05
Afternoon	13.25	13.30

- 4.2 Students who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Where students arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out at section 5 applies.
- 4.3 The register is marked using the national statutory attendance and absence codes which can be found in the DfE Attendance Guidance.

- 4.4 Where a student attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, we will treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter in accordance with the behaviour policy and engage parents where necessary.

## 5 Late arrival

- 5.1 Carre's Grammar School: If a student arrives at the school after the relevant registration period has ended, but within the relevant session, they must immediately go to the school office to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness to enable the school to establish the appropriate attendance or absence code. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.
- 5.2 Kesteven & Sleaford High School: If a student arrives at the school after the relevant registration period has ended, but within the relevant session, they must immediately go to the student services in reception to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness to enable the school to establish the appropriate attendance or absence code. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.
- 5.3 Persistent lateness will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in line with the behaviour policy.

## 6 Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

- 6.1 **Authorised absence** - absence will only be authorised where the school has given approval in advance for a student to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the school can authorise absence.
- 6.2 **Unauthorised absence** – absence will be marked as unauthorised where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

### 6.3 Reporting absence from the School

- 6.3.1 Where a student is to be absent from the school without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the school by telephone on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the school know when they expect the student to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the school on each day of absence.
- 6.3.2 In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, the parents/cares may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor. If this evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.
- 6.3.3 Any unexplained absence will be followed up by the school promptly.
- 6.3.4 In cases where the academy needs clarification to accurately record the absence in the attendance register, the parents/carers may be asked to provide the Academy with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor to support an absence for illness. If satisfactory evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

## **6.4 Appointments**

- 6.4.1 Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a student should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.
- 6.4.2 Where an appointment must take place during school time, the student should attend the school for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given to the form tutor, via the student planner or an email sent to [enquiries@carres.uk](mailto:enquiries@carres.uk) or [enquiries@kshs.uk](mailto:enquiries@kshs.uk) as appropriate.

## **6.5 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)**

- 6.5.1 The School will grant permission for a student to be absent from school in the circumstances described in paragraph 37 of the DfE Attendance Guidance which can be summarised as follows:
- taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
  - attendance at an interview for entry into another educational setting or future employment
  - study leave for public examinations
  - temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
  - other exceptional circumstances.
- 6.5.2 Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking students out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time.
- 6.5.3 To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Headteacher and, wherever possible, at least 2 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
- 6.5.4 Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Headteacher will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:
- will be confirmed in writing
  - is solely at the Headteacher's discretion and
  - is final.
- 6.5.5 Where permission is granted, the Headteacher will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.
- 6.5.6 If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see section 7 below).

## **6.6 Religious observance**

6.6.1 We recognise that students of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:

- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs,

the absence from the school will be authorised.

6.6.2 We ask that parents/carers notify the school by writing to the school in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

## **7 Addressing poor attendance and punctuality**

7.1 The schools will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the students or groups of students who need it most. In doing so, the school, led by the SAC, will:

- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify students at risk of poor attendance
- provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Year, Key Stage Managers and relevant leaders
- identify students who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full year data to identify patterns and trends
- benchmark school attendance data at each level against local, regional and national level
- monitor the impact of the school strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular students and particular groups
- work with the Local Authority and other local partners to identify groups
- hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of students who the school and/or Local Authority consider to be vulnerable

7.2 Our procedure for managing unexplained absences is for the school to contact the parent on the first day of absence following the closure of the register. This may be by text message or phone call.

7.3 Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- a pattern of unauthorised absence
- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival
- persistent truancy or lateness



we will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.

- 7.4 In cases where the school has been unable to establish a clear reason for absence and/or has welfare concerns about the student, a home welfare check will be carried out.
- 7.5 Failure to attend or arrive at lessons on time may also be dealt with as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- 7.6 Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place an attendance contract.
- 7.7 Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the School will signpost and support access to any additional services.
- 7.8 Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the school and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a financial penalty (£80 if paid within 21 days, £160 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents, which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.
- 7.9 When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:
- the National Framework for penalty notices as set out in paragraphs 175 – 201 of the DfE Attendance Guidance; and
  - the Local Authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.
- 7.10 In the event of a penalty notice being issued but not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The Local Authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.

## **8 Dual Registered Students**

Occasionally a student will be dual registered and will access education through another registered provider. Where this is the case, the school has responsibility for the student's education and welfare. The school will work with the provider and expect to receive progress and attendance reports. In addition, the school will:

- Contact the student at least every 10 school days with the expectation that the school will see the student
- Where visible contact is not possible the school may conduct a home visit
- If the school is unable to make visible contact after a home visit it will ask the police to conduct a safe and welfare check and notify the school thereafter

## **9 Children Missing in Education**

The school recognises that patterns of poor attendance or unauthorised absences may be causes for concern from a safeguarding perspective and the school complies with the latest guidance from the statutory authorities regarding Children Missing in Education. The school will, therefore, endeavour to ascertain at the earliest opportunity, typically on the first day of absence, a reason for the absence by contacting the parent/carer. Where there are safeguarding concerns, these will be raised with the Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL).

Where parents notify the school that they are moving location in the UK or abroad, admissions staff will ensure that details of future address and school are obtained before the student's departure. If this information is not available at point of departure parents should be asked to provide details of a means of contacting them so that this information can be secured at the earliest opportunity once they have arrived in the new location. A failure to provide this information could raise safeguarding concerns. The DSL will ensure that relevant staff are aware of the agreed Local Authority and LSCP protocols for Children Missing in Education and will take prompt and timely action where concerns are raised by colleagues.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Four Tier Attendance Framework

**Approved by the Trustees on .....**

**Next Review Date: ..... (annually)**

## Appendix 1 – Four Tier Attendance Framework

### Framework for attendance improvement and management

<b>Tier 1</b>	<p><b>Universal Support: Prevention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed procedures for the completion of registers are in place.</li> <li>• Daily attendance data is monitored.</li> <li>• First day call or text is used in the event that a child is registered as absent from the and the reason is unknown.</li> <li>• Attendance data reviewed regularly with additional monitoring where necessary.</li> <li>• Early intervention is provided where attendance is triggering a concern.</li> <li>• Agreed procedures for pupils who arrive late to school/lessons.</li> <li>• School adheres to government guidance in response to requests for term time holidays/absences.</li> <li>• Agreed procedures for promoting and incentivising good attendance.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 2</b>	<p><b>Early Intervention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A telephone conversation by the Form Tutor or Head of Year with parents/carers to discuss concerns.</li> <li>• A letter home informing parents/carers of the child’s attendance figure and offering support.</li> <li>• A letter home requesting medical evidence to be provided in order for the school to authorise the child’s absence(s).</li> <li>• A meeting with parents/carers (and the child) to discuss attendance.</li> <li>• A home visit to meet with the child and parents/carers if the child is refusing/unable to come into school.</li> <li>• School Attendance Champion (or other nominated member of staff) will invite parents/carers (and the child) to an Attendance Review meeting to set formal improvement targets.</li> <li>• Interventions are put into place where necessary, e.g. Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) for emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA), referral for counselling support.</li> <li>• A Key Worker will be allocated for the child.</li> <li>• Consideration of a part-time timetable (in accordance with a PSP only).</li> <li>• School Attendance Champion or other staff with responsibility for managing attendance will attend LA Briefings and training events.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 3</b>	<p><b>Targeted Intervention 1: persistently absent below 90%</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary Early Help assessment.</li> <li>• Referring the case to the Local Authority for consideration of issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).</li> <li>• Continuing the PSP, with use of additional funding to access support, e.g., Art Therapy/Additional Counselling.</li> <li>• Accessing support from Pupil Reintegration Team with PSP if necessary.</li> <li>• Making a referral to the Pupil Not Attending Regularly Team (PNAR) at the Local Authority (LA) - in line with the directed timeframe.</li> <li>• Making a referral to the Child Missing Education Team (CME) at the Local Authority - in line with the directed timeframe.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 4</b>	<p><b>Targeted Intervention 2: severely absent below 50%</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) by LA.</li> <li>• Parenting contract.</li> <li>• Parenting order.</li> <li>• Attendance prosecution.</li> <li>• Referring the case to the LA for consideration of implementing an Education Supervision Order (ESO) with the child.</li> <li>• Referring to specialist Alternative Provision, e.g. Pilgrim.</li> <li>• Statutory children’s social care referral where there are safeguarding concerns (particularly when attendance becomes severe - below 50%).</li> </ul>

*Please be aware that depending upon availability, and the needs of the individual, the support strategies offered may differ from above.*