

CAISTOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Caistor Grammar School is justifiably proud of its enviable record of student attendance when it has consistently been in the top three schools in Lincolnshire over many years.
- 1.2 The Governing Body of Caistor Grammar School are committed to doing all that they reasonably can to promote good attendance at the School.
- 1.3 The School, through its development of this policy and many other statements, such as the Headmaster's regular newsletters and the Guidelines to the Partnership for the parents of students at Caistor Grammar School, seek to make clear to the whole School community how highly student attendance is valued and how much the Governors wish to discourage parents from taking their children out of school during term time.

2. The current legal position

- 2.1 The Education Act 1996 states that parents must ensure their children receive full time education. Failure to do so can result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution. "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to regularly attend at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence" under Section 444 (1) of the 1996 Education Act.
- 2.2 How this policy is administered in practice has been changed recently. Amendments to the regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (English) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on September 1st 2013. This particularly applies to term time holidays.
- 2.3 The DfE statutory guidance document on school attendance says Head Teachers have discretion to grant leave in term time but they should only do so in "exceptional circumstances." If a Head Teacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time the child can be away from school. "This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday."
- 2.4 The statutory guidance also says that schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances such as the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice and the pupil's attainment and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

3. Policy of Caistor Grammar School's Governors

- 3.1 The Governors of Caistor Grammar School interpret the recently amended regulations to mean that it is generally expected that holidays will not be taken in term time. However, they have permitted the Headmaster the discretion to allow limited time away from School when the case is well made and advance notice prior to a booking is given. In most cases, however, it has to be understood that permission will not be granted.

- 3.2 The Governors of Caistor Grammar School wish this Attendance Policy to apply to all the students of the school regardless of whether they are above or below statutory age. Students and their parents who voluntarily enrol their children into the School have to accept the School's policies and high expectations.
- 3.3 Parents who wish to seek permission for any sort of absence including term time holidays are asked to fill in an official Request for Absence form, which is gold in colour and can be gained from the School Office. This can be returned directly to the Headmaster's Secretary for processing. Every effort will be made to process these forms as speedily as possible and, if necessary, speak to the parent concerned. The School requests that these forms are given as soon as possible when an absence is planned and known about and certainly before anything is booked. It is to be expected that if forms are handed in after an absence or not handed in at all, then significant consequences will be considered.

4. The issue of penalty notices

- 4.1 The 1996 Education Act introduces the concept of penalty notices and fines being issued to parents in the event of their breaching the School's expectations on student attendance.
- 4.2 Caistor Grammar School's Governors reserve the right to issue a Parental Notice if they feel that a significant amount of time has been taken out of school which is not authorised by the Headmaster. The Headmaster will liaise with the Chair of the Curriculum and Pupil Welfare Committee before deciding to issue a Penalty Notice. Parents will also be consulted with before any decision is taken.

5. The School's expectations over parental attitudes towards attendance

- 5.1 The following is an extract from the current version of the Partnership document on the relationship between Caistor Grammar School and the parents of its students.

“We expect parents to do all in their power to ensure that their children **attend School** during term time and that they will be punctual. As far as possible, we expect parents to organise family holidays and other activities outside of term time. The Government's guidance on this matter states that “**parents do not have a right to take children on holiday in term time.**” The Government expects that Leave of Absence will not be granted by the School except in exceptional circumstances. There is a special Leave of Absence Form available from the School Office, which should be filled in and returned directly to the Headmaster some time before any absence is to take place. This will be returned to parents.

“We expect parents to be honest, open and respectful in all their dealings with the School. This is especially the case in matters relating to student attendance. We expect that parents will make requests before they book holidays.

January 2017

Approved at Full Governors' meeting on 6 March.