

27 September 2024

# Castleman Academy Trust

Chief Executive Officer : Rhonda Moore  
Tudor Road, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 8AA



Dear All,

As we start a new academic year, it is important to consider the importance of good attendance. If students are attending school regularly, they are more likely to:

- Thrive in their learning as they have not missed any inputs and have more opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Take part in the social side of school life and extra-curricular activities.
- Build friendships with their peers and develop good working relationships with adults.

We want children attending Castleman schools to have the best possible life chances, so we will do all that we can to encourage attendance of well above 95%.

The Department for Education states that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances AND current attendance is at least 95%.

It is impossible to present an exhaustive list of exceptional circumstances so individual requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, "exceptional" means that the event cannot be offered at any other time and/or you have no control over the dates decided. An example of exceptional circumstances may be that a family member is returning home from service duty in term time. Perhaps your employer will not allow you to take holidays at any other time, but in order to consider this type of issue, we must have a letter from your employer supporting your application.

To apply for a leave of absence please contact the school office for a Leave of Absence form. If leave of absence is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised. If the overall attendance level continues to be below expected standards, parents may be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

Attendance is recorded twice a day – once in the morning and once after lunch. Therefore, when a child misses a whole day of school, two absences are recorded.

We need to make you aware that following new guidance from the DFE, the Local Authority will be changing the way Penalty Notices for poor School Attendance and Term Time Leave are issued. Penalty notices can be issued both for poor and irregular School attendance, and also for Term Time leave. The cost of a penalty notice will be increasing to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 5 days of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period. Please note that Penalty Notices for both poor attendance and Term Time Leave are issued at the discretion of the Local Authority, however we are legally obliged to inform the Local Authority of School attendance and absence. These changes came into effect on the 19th August 2024.

We look forward to working with you in order to support good attendance in school. Please remember that the door is always open and staff will always be happy to talk through individual circumstances with you.

Yours sincerely,

Rhonda Moore  
Chief Executive Officer



Ferndown  
Middle School

