



# **Blackpool Gateway Academy**

## **Pupil Attendance Policy and Procedure**

**2021/22**

## **BLACKPOOL GATEWAY ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY**

This policy reflects the DfE regulations which came into force in Sept 2013 which state:

**‘Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.’**

Blackpool Gateway Academy would interpret “exceptional” in this context as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, outweighing the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another but the normality will be that requests for authorised absence will be refused.

You can be fined for taking your child out of school during term time without the school’s permission. School is obliged to notify Pupil Welfare who can give you a fine of £60, which rises to £120 if not paid within 21 days.

Holidays will be unauthorised for all children. Fixed penalty notices will be utilised for requests of 5 days or more, even if attendance is 100%. As a Trust we expect parents to utilise clear school closure times for holidays. In very exceptional circumstances, holidays may be authorised by the Headteacher.

The Headteacher’s decision on whether an absence is to be authorised or not authorised is FINAL.

Blackpool Gateway Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our Academy to celebrate achievement and attendance. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our Academy will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Our Academy will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil’s attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

### **Objectives**

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To monitor attendance and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism
- To acknowledge and celebrate a successful record of attendance
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the School
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils

- To work effectively with other services and agencies to support these objectives.

## **Information**

This identifies the information held by the school and will be considered when dealing with attendance and punctuality issues:

- Start and finishing times of registration: our doors open at 8.45am and Registration begins at 8.55am. A child arriving after 9.00am will be marked as 'Late'. A child arriving after 9.25am will be marked as unauthorised late when the registers close at 9.25am.
- Guidance for staff on the accurate completion of registers
- The importance of punctuality and the response to lateness. If a child arrives at school after 9.00 a.m. they will be marked late.
- Daily contact between parents and School when a child is absent.
- In line with Health Protection Agency guidelines, a period of 24 hours absence dependent on last time unwell is required for any pupil with vomiting or diarrhoea and discussion with school will be necessary. Such absence due to illness is authorised.
- Clear guidance to parents that Head teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Referral routes with roles and responsibilities for pupils with emerging attendance problems (Parents of pupils with attendance below 90% will be contacted, and may also be contacted if attendance is unexpectedly below 95%).
- The inclusion of attendance information in School documentation, e.g. the website, reports, newsletters, home-school agreements.
- Annual reports to parents include a record of their child's attendance.
- The Headteacher's termly report to Governors records the attendance figures for the academic year to date.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is important to set realistic targets; these targets may be set in consultation with the Local Authority or with the Governing Body. The school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

### **School Target**

Our school target for attendance is set at 95%

### **Persistent Absence Definition**

Attendance below 90% is defined by the DFE as persistent absence.

### **Definition Of "Parent"**

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" to include:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not; and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. When evaluating success the school will consider whether or not:
  - Patterns and trends in the school's attendance and pupils' punctuality are improved
  - Parental response to absence has improved
  - The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance by celebrating good attendance within the school, governing body and the local community
  - Pupils and parents are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and aware of the attendance procedures operating within school
  - Parents and governors are made aware of the current law on attendance
  - Attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies or PSHE lessons.

### **Monitoring**

Blackpool Gateway Academy works in partnership with the LA Pupil Welfare Officer. Regular meetings are held where attendance is analysed and vulnerable children are targeted to improve attendance. Parents are routinely informed of their child's attendance through a traffic light system.

**Green** – Attendance over 95% - no concerns about attendance, please keep it up!

**Amber** – Attendance of 90% - 95% - potential cause for concern, needs improvement.

**Red** - Attendance below 90% - this is classed as 'Persistent Absence' by the government and requires action.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Class teachers take the register each session. The School Office contacts parents/carers if children are absent without prior notification. The Head of School, Family Engagement Officer, Pupil Welfare Officer and Governing Body monitor patterns and trends over time. The Head of School is responsible for decisions about any leave of absence requested for exceptional circumstances during term time.

### **Good Practice**

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- Reporting missing children to the LA
- Rewarding and celebrating good and improving attendance through newsletters, certificates, stickers and other initiatives.

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole School.

**Any unauthorised absence is damaging to a child's education as well as reflecting badly on the school. It also gives children the wrong messages about the importance of education which may lead to problems later in schooling. Good attendance and punctuality are important values for later in life.**

**Policy reviewed: March 2023**

**By: S Robinson**

**Review date: Sept 2023**