



# **Blackpool Gateway Academy**

## **Pupil Attendance Policy and Procedure**

**2025/2026**

## **BLACKPOOL GATEWAY ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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.
- To ensure compliance with the DfE Statutory Guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' (August 2024) and the FCAT 'Every Day Counts: Attendance Improvement Strategy'.
- To meet or exceed the statutory overall attendance target.
- To reduce the rate of Persistent Absence and Severe Absence.
- To embed a 'support-first' culture to identify and remove barriers to attendance through early intervention and partnership with families.

### **Key Definitions and School Targets**

- **Overall Attendance Target**-the school's minimum expected attendance for 2025/26 is 92.4% (the Indicative ABIE), with the ambition to reach a potential rate of 95.7% (national average at the time of writing this policy) by mirroring best practice from similar schools.
- **Persistent Absence (PA)**-any pupil with an attendance rate of 90% or below is classified as a Persistently Absent pupil. The school's target is to reduce the PA rate to 11.7%.
- **Severe Absence (SA)**-any pupil with an attendance rate of 50% or below is classified as Severely Absent. These pupils pose the highest safeguarding and academic risk and require immediate, intensive support. The school's target is to reduce the current SA rate of 1.7%.

- **Targeted Cohort Support**-the school commits to targeted monitoring of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) or Pupil Premium, with a specific objective to increase their attendance from 94.1% to 95.2%.

### **Term-Time Holiday Fines**

In line with updated government guidance, our school adheres to the new national framework for issuing fines related to unauthorised term-time holidays. Parents and carers are reminded that they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.

The following will apply:

- Any absence due to a holiday taken during term time without the Headteacher's authorisation will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Where a pupil has 10 or more sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a 10-week period, including those due to term-time holidays, a fixed penalty notice (FPN) may be issued by the local authority.
- Our local council can give each parent a fine of £80, rising to £160 if you do not pay within 21 days. From the 2024 to 2025 school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period. If you get a second fine in 3 years it will be £160. If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school. If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years you will not be fined but may be taken to court.

Please be aware that permission for term-time holidays will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and families must request this in advance by completing a Leave of Absence form, available from the school office or website. The Headteacher will consider each request individually and will communicate the decision in writing.

Parents are strongly advised to avoid booking holidays during term time, as these are highly likely to be unauthorised and result in a fine.

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

### **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**

**The Attendance Lead**-Miss Makinson (Headteacher) is the designated Attendance Lead, responsible for ensuring all statutory duties are met, including: leading the attendance strategy, ensuring accurate completion of the attendance register and making decisions on granting leaves of absence in term time.

**Pastoral/Key Worker Team**-the Family Engagement Worker, Pupil Welfare Officer and Key Workers are key personnel responsible for delivering the 'support-first' approach and providing Early Help support to families, in line with the school's multi-tiered intervention system.

**All Staff**-all staff must be familiar with the policy, including the accurate use of attendance codes, to support the whole-school culture of high attendance.

**Class Teachers**-take the register each session.

**School Admin Team**-contacts parents/carers if children are absent without prior notification.

## **Attendance Procedures and Statutory Compliance**

- **Statutory Culture**-the school maintains a 'support-first' culture by building strong relationships and working jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership to remove them.
- **Attendance Register**-the attendance register is a statutory document. It must be accurately completed for every session using the codes specified in the DfE Guidance. Unauthorised absence will be rigorously followed up by first-day contact.
- **Leave of Absence in Term Time**-in accordance with the Education Regulations 2006, the Head of School may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances. Parents have no entitlement to term-time leave for holidays.
- **Legal Measures (Local Authority Code of Conduct)**-where a pupil's absence meets the legal threshold (e.g. 10 or more sessions lost to unauthorised absence) and school support has not been successful, the school will refer the case to the Local Authority in line with their statutory duties. This may result in the issuance of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in court under the Blackpool Local Authority's Code of Conduct.
- 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: November 2025**

**By: N.Makinson**

**Review date: November 2026**