

## **Attendance Policy 2025/26**

### **Policy Statement**

Blackpool Aspire Academy is committed to ensuring that pupils and families understand the absolute importance of full attendance at school. Pupils who attend school regularly make much better progress socially and academically. Absence has a detrimental effect on a pupils' academic progress; indeed, it is the greatest determinant of under-achievement at all phases. Poor attendance or sporadic absences may also be an indicator of underlying issues that need resolving either inside or outside of the academy. Absence may also mean that a young person is more vulnerable to safeguarding risks. As such, our academy invests time and money in working with families to make pupil attendance a top priority. As a school, we take our duty to safeguard children and our mission to challenge educational and social disadvantage seriously. Securing great attendance for all pupils is at the heart of our work. We work tirelessly to create a culture in our academy where pupils want to attend and we see great attendance as a benchmark of our positive culture.

***Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, May 2022, updated 2024, p.5).***

### **Expectations**

Children should be present, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence without a good reason is an offence by the parent or carer. Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents or carers) as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

'Authorised' absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for unavoidable reasons such as genuine illness where medical evidence is provided.

'Unauthorised' absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. These include:

- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been reported by parents or carers or properly explained
- Children who arrive to school after the register has closed (9.15am).
- Extended term time absence such as holidays
- Parents or carers keeping children off school unnecessarily

***The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, amended 2024, Reg. 6 & Reg. 7. Headteachers may only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances***

If there are problems that affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with home and pupils to resolve these problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly, focussed, approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation and guidance:

- ❖ Working together to improve school attendance 2024
- ❖ The Education Act 1996 and 2002
- ❖ Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- ❖ School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- ❖ Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- ❖ The Equality Act 2010
- ❖ Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2022/24, p.9).***

The Academy will:

- Ensure that attendance is everyone's business.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures, registration regulations and education law.
- Complete electronic or paper registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.
- Complete electronic registers at the beginning of each lesson.
- Communicate to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence.
- Follow up on any non-attendance with no contact on the first day of absence with a phone call and / or home visit
- Display attendance rates around the Academy and reward good and improved attendance of all students.
- Promote the role of the form tutor/class teacher in monitoring and rewarding good attendance for students in their form.
- Challenge attendance that is less than good and set targets for attendance as outlined in the attendance action plan.
- Intervene when poor attendance / punctuality becomes a problem and before it becomes a habit.
- Deal sympathetically with any problem a student may have which is causing attendance / punctuality to decline and always stay in regular contact with parents / carers
- Promote positive staff attitudes to students returning after absence.
- Work actively with children and families to emphasise the benefits of high attendance; instilling and reinforcing good attendance habits.
- Consult with all members of the Academy community and the Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO) service in developing and maintaining the whole Academy attendance policy.
- Ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by Senior Leaders and the Academy Council.
- Communicate a clear and transparent process around the management of attendance to families, following the Academy's staged attendance response plan.
- Report to the Academy Council each term.
- Work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a student is absent, she/he will be missed.
- Have in place procedures that will allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of others.
- Not grant extended leave during term time and will automatically refer to the local authority to fine

Families will:

- Encourage their child to attend the academy daily, be punctual and inform the academy immediately if their child is absent.
- Inform the academy of any hospital appointment in advance unavoidably scheduled during school time via the 'Request for Medical Leave of Absence' form which is available for download on the school website.
- Inform the academy of any problems which might affect their child's attendance
- Cooperate with the academy if their child's attendance / punctuality is unsatisfactory

- Make requests for special leave of absence for their child during term time by completing in advance an 'Application for Leave in Exceptional Circumstances' form which is available for download on the school website.

Students will:

- Always attend the academy unless prevented by a specific illness or unavoidable circumstances.
- Always arrive to the academy and lessons on time.

### Targets, attendance and punctuality

The target for all students is to achieve 100% attendance and 100% punctuality. The minimum expectation for all pupils is attendance over the academic year of 97%.

Attendance during one academic year	Equivalent days	Equivalent sessions	Equivalent weeks	Equivalent lessons
97%	6 days	12 sessions	1 week	36 lessons
95%	9 days	18 sessions	2 weeks	54 lessons
90%	19 days	38 sessions	4 weeks	114 lessons
85%	29 days	58 sessions	6 weeks	174 lessons
80%	38 days	76 sessions	8 weeks	228 lessons
75%	48 days	96 sessions	10 weeks	288 lessons
70%	57 days	114 sessions	11.5 weeks	342 lessons

All pupils are expected to arrive at school no later than **8.35am**. If a pupil arrives between **8:36 am and 9am** they will enter via the **late gate** and have their name taken for a **lunchtime detention**. If pupils arrive **after 9am** they must enter through D Block into the **Ready Room** where they will remain for the rest of the session in order not to disturb lessons in the main building. Pupils arriving after 9am will receive a **1-hour detention that evening**. If a pupil arrives after **9:15am** without a good reason, this will count as one whole session of unauthorised absence (i.e., half a day).

If a pupil is **late 2 times (between 8.36am and 9am)** within the space of 1 week, then a **1 hour after school detention** will be served on the **Friday** of that week. If a pupil is **late 2 times (after 9am)** within the space of 1 week, then a **2 hour after school detention** will be served on the **Friday** of that week.

We understand that sometimes there are genuine reasons as to why pupils may be late to school. If this is the case, we encourage you to contact the school on 01253 353155 so we are made aware of these.

### The impact of poor attendance on academic progress

If your child misses' school on a regular basis, they are damaging their future life choices. Every school day counts. When a child misses school regularly, it has a serious impact on their education and can limit their future opportunities. National research shows a clear link between poor attendance and lower academic achievement. Just **19 days of absence** over the course of a school year can, on average, result in a **drop of one full grade at GCSE** across all subjects.

Consistently missing school means pupils fall behind in their learning, find it harder to keep up with the curriculum, and often struggle with gaps in knowledge. These gaps can affect confidence, motivation, and exam performance.

Key facts:

- Pupils with attendance below **90%** are classed as **persistently absent**, and nationally, this group performs significantly worse at GCSE compared to their peers.
- Good attendance is strongly linked to better **GCSE results**, which in turn open doors to college, apprenticeships, and future careers.
- Missing just a day or two each fortnight may not seem like much, but it adds up to a month of missed learning over the school year.
- Regular attendance is not just about academic success, it's also about building routines, resilience, and relationships that prepare young people for life beyond school.

### **What if a pupil is genuinely ill?**

We understand that pupils may be ill on occasions and when this is the case we accept that they should be kept at home and away from school.

Procedure for parents and carers if a pupil is too unwell to attend school:

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence we will:

- Contact home by telephone, text message or a home visit.
- Send out the attendance officer to complete home visits where appropriate
- After five days of absence the Assistant Headteacher in charge of Attendance will incorporate the student in the weekly discussion with the PWO.
- After a maximum of 10 days absence, the Assistant Headteacher will ask the PWO or the Police to call at the student's home. The aim of this being to identify and resolve the difficulties that are preventing the student from attending the Academy or to safeguard the student. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding Academy attendance.

Additionally, moving forward, FCAT have made the decision that we will **not be sending pupils home unattended**. If a pupil is unwell and needs to go home, we ask that they made this known to a member of staff. The attendance office will then make contact home. They will need to be collected by an adult whose contact details are on our school system. If a pupil is too ill to be in school, it is important that there is an adult at home to care for them.

### **Medical and dental appointments**

These should be made outside academy hours. Any urgent medical and dental appointments will only be authorised on sight of the appointment card. If the absence is authorised, families must ensure they collect the pupil from visitors' reception as no pupil will be allowed out of the academy unaccompanied unless there is prior agreement with the academy. Families must also ensure that the pupil is aware of the appointment and is ready waiting at the authorised time. It is not the

responsibility of the academy to inform pupils of appointments. In emergency situations, we will ensure the pupils is aware of the appointment. In any other circumstances, the pupil has to make their own way to reception at the authorised time.

### **Leave of absence during term time**

Leave of absence during term time is not permitted. Any extended absence from the academy will be counted as unauthorised and will normally lead to a fixed penalty notice from the local authority in line with the national framework for penalty notices. Local authorities may choose to prosecute in instances of repeated or prolonged leave of absence.

### **Home Visits**

Home visits are taken by the academy for a number of reasons and not purely for safeguarding reasons. A visit will commence following 2 consecutive days of absence. If a pupil is off ill, a home visit may be undertaken to check in with the family as well as offer avenues of support for those pupils who may be experiencing barriers to attending school. Collaboration with families to limit school absence is the best way to address any concerns and it is important to notice that these actions are undertaken without judgement with the overall aim of meeting the best interests of the pupil.

### **If parents and carers are experiencing difficulty in getting pupils to school**

Parents and carers should contact the pupils head of year or the attendance team by email. The head of year and attendance team are the people in school who will usually know pupils the best and will be able to suggest strategies if the problem persists. They may be a revised timetable with later/earlier starts and the employment of our Bridge provision, which is used to aid transition into mainstream lessons. However, both of these strategies are only intended to be used as short-term measures and not for an extensive period of time.

### **Religious leave of absence**

For a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belongs to, pupils will be granted one day for each occasion of religious observance with a maximum of three days over one academic year. As a rule, 'a day set apart for religious observance' is a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion. These absences, if granted, will be recorded as authorised using the 'R' code. These are the codes as stipulated by the Department for Education and whilst absence is authorised, it does count against the child's attendance. This is the DfE national policy.

### **Encouraging high attendance**

Aspire Academy rewards students for high attendance by:

- Awarding achievement points for 100% attendance in a term
- Providing students with achievement certificates for 100% attendance
- Providing students with achievement certificates for improved attendance
- Making attendance part of every formal school report sent home to parents and carers

## Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Attendance will be monitored daily and patterns of absence will be investigated promptly. Families will be contacted if attendance falls below expectations. Early Help support may be offered, and where attendance continues to be a concern, referrals to the Local Authority may be made.

*Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance (DfE, 2016, p.4).*

Category	%	Action	Days and weeks missed	% Chance of attaining 5 Grades 5-9
<b>Level 1</b> -100% Attendance	100%	Names of these students will be displayed on attendance boards around school  Pupils celebrated during success assemblies & Attendance voucher draw.  Celebration event at the end of each full term  End of year rewards trip	0 days  0 weeks	94.8%
<b>Level 2</b> – Excellent attendance	99.9 to 98%	End of year rewards trip	3 days	
<b>Level 3</b> – Risk of underachieving	97.99 to 97%	Text home informing parents their child's attendance has fallen below 98%.  Attendance monitored by form tutor during attendance morning in form	5 days/ 1 week	74.3%
<b>Level 4</b> – Risk of underachieving	96.99 – 95%	Form tutors to call home for two students fortnightly.  Parents sent link to attendance video on school website and invited to discuss attendance at parents evening.	7.5 days/ 1.5 weeks	
<b>Level 5</b> – serious risk of underachieving	94.99- 93%	Stage 1 intervention process will commence. Letter 1 is sent home to inform parents that attendance has fallen below national expectations, and the consequences associated with this.  Heads of Year/Heads of Faculty to make calls home.  SEND team to make phone calls for SEN students to address any barriers.  Parents sent link to attendance video on school website and invited to discuss attendance at parents evening.	12.5 days/ 2.5 weeks	60.4%
<b>Level 6</b> – serious risk of underachieving	92.99 – 90%	Stage 1 process continued.	3 weeks/ 15 days	34.7%

		<p>Letter 2 is sent home (serious risk of underachieving).</p> <p>Stage 1 support meeting with parent and attendance manager (SENCo to support with SEN students).</p> <p>Parents informed of the risks of becoming permanently absent.</p> <p><b>Priority 1 listing for calls if absent.</b></p>		
<b>Level 7</b> – Extreme risk of underachieving	89.99% and below	<p>Stage 2 intervention process will commence. Letter 1 is sent home.</p> <p>Weekly monitoring by attendance team &amp; daily communication with home for absence.</p> <p>Stage 2 process continued for no improvement</p> <p>Letter 2- Attendance panel meeting letter invite sent home.</p> <p>Attendance panel meeting takes place to complete an attendance contract (PWO involvement if appropriate). There will be a review period of 3 weeks.</p> <p>If there is still no improvement, then stage 3 letter is sent home, and this can lead to PWO involvement and a fixed penalty notice.</p>	4 weeks/ 19 days+	26.7%

## Legal Action

In line with the Education Act 1996, the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 (as amended), and the Department for Education's School Attendance Guidance (2022), the school works in partnership with the local authority to take legal action where a pupil's unauthorised absence meets the threshold set out in national guidance. When a pupil accrues **10 sessions** (equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within any rolling **10-school-week period**, the school must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Penalty notices are issued by the local authority and carry a fine of **£80** if paid within 21 days, rising to **£160** if paid within 28 days. If the fine is not paid, the case may be referred for prosecution under **Section 444 of the Education Act 1996**. A maximum of two penalty notices per parent, per child, can be issued within a three-year period. Further offences may result in direct prosecution.

While legal action is a last resort, it forms part of a wider approach to securing attendance, and will only be taken when support has been offered but concerns persist.