



# Attendance Policy



## Park Community Academy

*Updated September 2024*

Park Community Academy **expects every child to have punctual and regular school attendance.** This is essential if all of our children and young people are to be given the opportunity to benefit

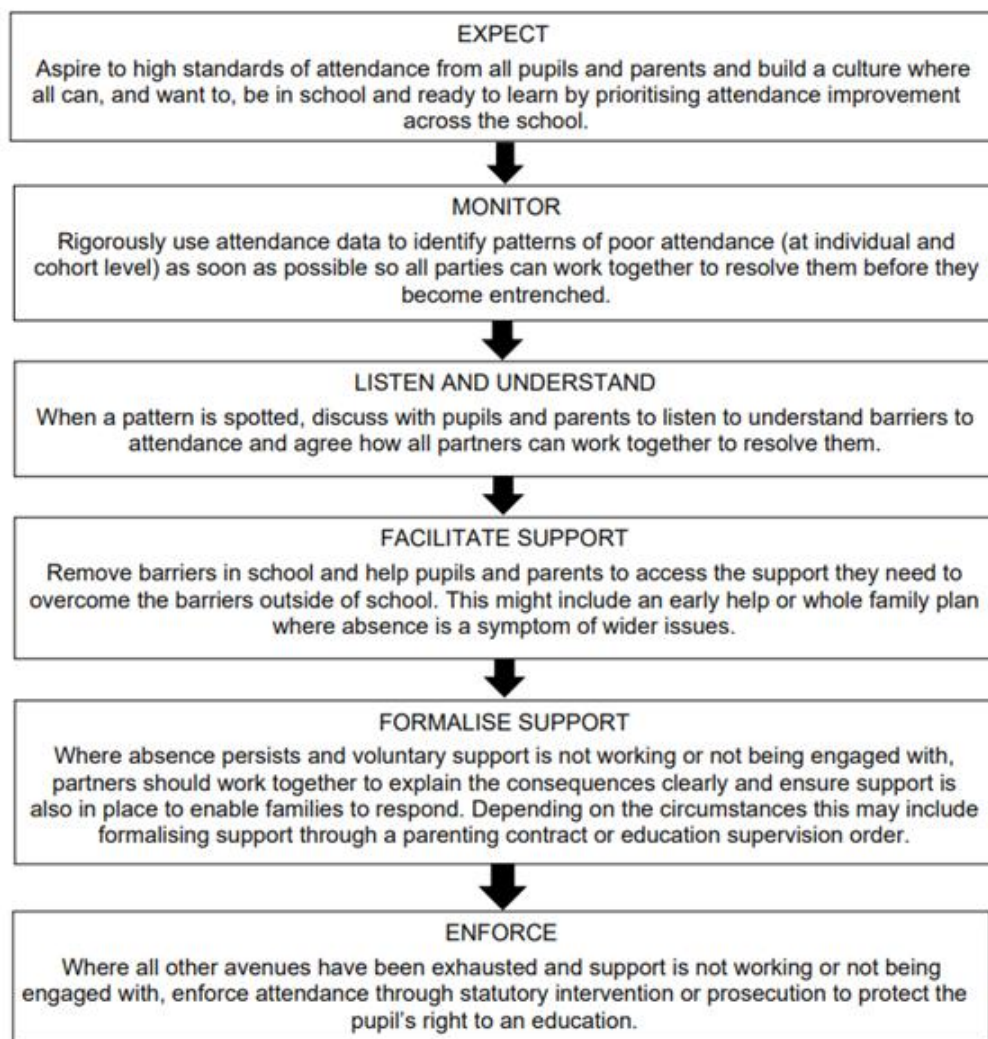
from effective learning and support in order to achieve their full potential. School is where children learn and they are safe in school. Children who fail to attend school regularly can become vulnerable and could place themselves at greater risk than others in many ways such as becoming involved in offending or becoming the victims of crime.

In order to improve levels of school attendance and punctuality, Park Community Academy work in partnership with Blackpool Children's Services and Pupil Welfare to promote and encourage regular, punctual attendance of all pupils in order for them to achieve their very best at school.

The named Senior Attendance Champion at PCA is Mr B Whittaker (Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral and Behaviour), who can be contacted through the school office on 01253 764130.

Schools must maintain attendance registers and accurately record and monitor all absence and lateness (As of 8/24, these will be preserved for 6 years). Park Community Academy identifies and strives to resolve barriers affecting 100% attendance. Park Community Academy is committed to reducing absences, including levels of persistent absence. (A child is classified as having persistent absence if he/she has an absence rate of 10% or more). Park Community Academy understands the crucial importance of early intervention.

Clear procedures are in place to identify and follow up all absences and lateness from day one. At PCA we aim to work together with our learners and families to improve school attendance by following the guidance from the DfE (Working together to improve school attendance, August 2024) below:



## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/CARERS

- Parent/carers are responsible by law for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and on time.
- Parent/carers can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children.
- All children should have the same opportunity for learning in order to achieve their full potential.
- Park Community Academy has a positive, proactive approach towards attendance matters and encourages parents/carers to take an active role in their child's education.
- Parents/carers play a major role in improving levels of attendance and punctuality and reducing absence. The relationship between home and school is a vital part of a child's positive education and care.

### Legal responsibilities of parents

All children aged between 5 and 16 are required by law to receive an education. Under the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring regular school attendance for their children. Failure to do so could result in legal proceedings being taken by the Local Education Authority.

**A summary table of responsibilities for school attendance can be found on PCA's website under: about us, policies, PCA policies.**

As parent/carers you should:

**I** - Inspire your child by taking a real interest in their education

**N** - Never book a holiday or medical appointment in the school day in term-time (**where possible**)

**T** - Take an active interest in your child's daily school life and work

**E** - Ensure that you attend parents' evenings and other school events

**R** - Read letters from school which your child brings home

**E** - Ensure that your child completes and returns their homework

**S** - Send your child to school regularly and punctually

**T** - Talk to school if you are concerned about your child's development.

## PUNCTUALITY

Parents/Carers are expected to ensure that their child is punctual for school. If a child arrives late, they miss valuable teaching and often feel embarrassed. Poor punctuality leads to underachievement, absence and safety issues. Any child arriving after close of register (**9:20am**), without good reason, will be marked as unauthorised for the session.

### **Can we take family holidays during term-time?**

**Park Community Academy will not authorise any holiday in term time** unless it is for exceptional circumstances. Any leave of absence/family holidays should be taken during school holidays. If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time, you should complete an application form (**appendix 2**), at least three weeks in advance, stating clearly the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time and outlining **the exceptional circumstances which could include the** social and educational benefits to your child. PCA pays due regard to the value of travel as an important learning, experiential and life skills opportunity for children with additional needs and will always try to support targeted

residential opportunities that promote the social, emotional and physical development of the pupils. The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission having given consideration to:

- your child's age
- the time of year
- the overall attendance pattern of your child

Schools are closed for 13 weeks a year. Parent/carers therefore have 91 days in which to take holidays outside of school hours. Park Community Academy expects parents to organise their holidays outside term time. Regular school attendance is a key contribution to a child's life and is linked directly to their attainment at school and into adulthood. Any absence that a child has in their 195 days of schooling is lost, resulting in lost opportunities and gaps in their learning.

Schools are responsible attendance and respond issues which might lead

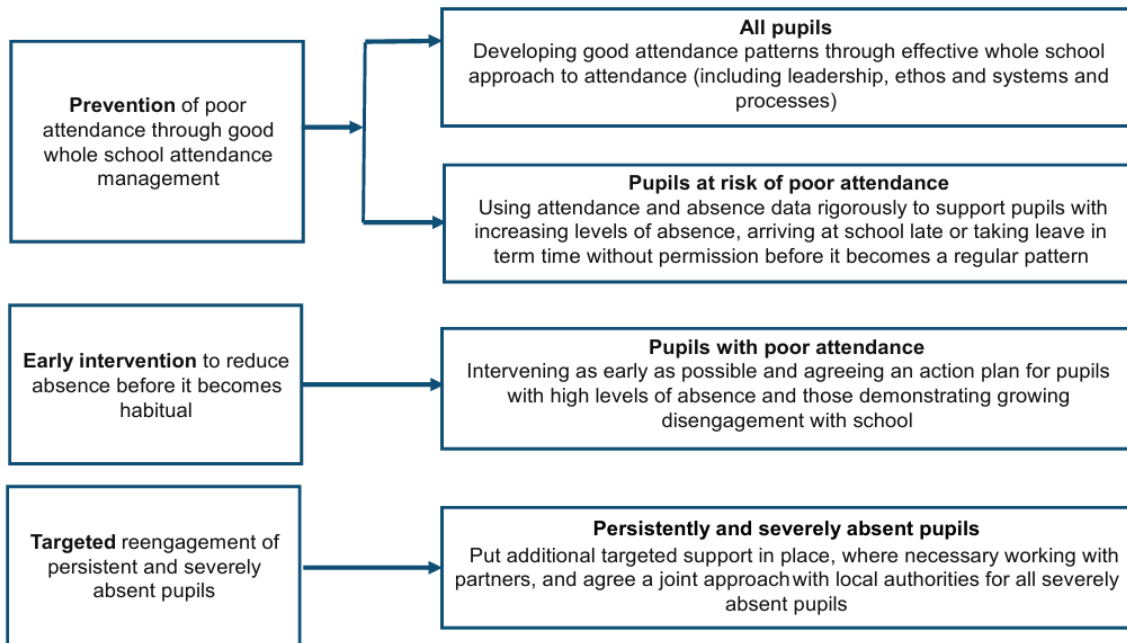
Park Community numerous interventions proactively follows the attendance, improvement below:

Pupil Welfare Service		<b>Blackpool Council</b>	Pupil Welfare Service	
<b>ATTENDANCE FACT SHEET</b>				
<b>Days off school add up to lost learning!</b>				
100% Attendance	0 weeks of learning missed.	Best chance of success.		
95% Attendance	1 week, 4 days of learning missed.			
90% Attendance	3 weeks, 4 days of learning missed.	Poor attendance.		
85% Attendance	5 weeks, 3 days of learning missed.			
80% Attendance	7 weeks, 3 days of learning missed.	Very poor attendance.		
75% Attendance	9 weeks, 1 day of learning missed.			

for supporting pupil quickly to difficulties and to non-attendance.

Academy implement to ensure that the academy 'Effective school and management' grid

## Effective school attendance improvement and management



In order to support attendance collaboratively, we follow a staged approach (page 6).

Therefore, if a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, the school will consider putting an **Improving Attendance Contract** into place (see Appendix 1).

Park Community Academy seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her full potential. We also aim to meet overall targets as set out by the Government, **the Local Authority**, the Trust and the school's Governing Body.

## *Staged Approach to Support Attendance*

How	By Whom
1. Parents/Carers of any new admissions to Park Community Academy will be made aware of the School Policy on attendance whilst discussing the Home/School Agreement and also through the School Brochure.	Child and Family Support Team (CFST)
2. Good attendance is promoted throughout the school in numerous ways e.g. Displays, assemblies, rewards, classroom-based activities. Regular reminders through contact with parents on the school newsletter, twitter, text messages and emails.	PCA Staff
3. Daily monitoring of school registers.	CFST/Office Staff/SMT

4. First day contact where appropriate by text, phone or home visits for pupils deemed at risk/vulnerable if contact cannot be made.	CFST/Office Staff
5. Home visits for pupils that have not been seen after 5 days of absence (dependent on reason for absence)	CFST
6. Fortnightly meetings with PWO to analyse attendance for individual pupils	CFST
<b>Under 92% Attendance</b>	
7. Following meetings with the PWO (taking into account the reasons for absence), parents/carers with pupils whose attendance is under 92% will receive an informal phone call to offer support and advice. This will be logged on the schools CPOMs system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In response to the phone call, pastoral support will be implemented where required.</li> <li>- Any in-school barriers to attendance will be addressed.</li> <li>- Where out of school barriers are identified, parents/carers will be signposted to services that can support.</li> <li>- Where appropriate PCA will take an active part in the multi-agency effort to support attendance with the local authority and other partners.</li> </ul>	CFST
<b>Under 90% Attendance (Persistent Absence)</b>	
8. Pupils with attendance under 90% will have 'notice to improve' letters sent home to express concerns re: attendance/punctuality and possible referral to PWO. These pupils will be closely monitored <b>by the family team.</b>	CFST/Office Staff
9. Personal contact will be made with parents/carers (this can be through an in-school meeting/ <b>attendance surgery</b> , home visit or phone call depending on the circumstances) to discuss concerns re: attendance/ punctuality. Persistent absence will be managed through an agreed <b>Improved Attendance Contract</b> (Appendix 1). This is an agreed contract to support pupil attendance.	CFST Headteacher Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO)
10. Possibilities of legal intervention such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education supervision orders</li> <li>- Fixed penalty notices</li> <li>- Attendance prosecution</li> </ul>	Head Teacher /SLT / PWO
<b>Severly absent pupils:</b>	
11. After following the steps above, agree a joint approach with the local authority and refer to the Pupil Welfare Officer. A court meeting of concern may be implemented.	CFST

## BLACKPOOL COUNCIL SUPPORT - THE ROLE OF PUPIL WELFARE OFFICERS (PWOs)

Park Community Academy has support from a PWO who monitors pupil attendance through regular inspection of the school register and liaison with school staff. Referrals to PWOs are made by schools. However, PWOs do consult with other professionals and can be contacted directly by parents/carers for support.

Before the school makes a referral to the PWO, we will have first undertaken a number of steps to address the pupil's non-attendance. Examples of which are meetings and attempted contact with parents by telephone, text and letters. A parent/carer may be contacted by a PWO if:

- The child's attendance is below 90% (persistently absent);
- The child has a pattern of irregular attendance (broken weeks);
- The child has had a period of non-attendance with no explanation or justifiable reason;
- The child has been regularly absent and communication between parent/carers and school has met with little or no response/improvement;
- The child is moving to another area and the school does not have a confirmed destination school/provider where the child will resume their education (such pupils are treated as "children missing education");
- A pattern of persistent lateness has developed;
- There are child protection concerns alongside poor attendance patterns;
- There are identifiable welfare issues, which are preventing a child from accessing education;

The main role of a PWO is to work with schools and families to help raise attendance levels for individual pupils, individual schools and for Blackpool as a whole, to ensure that all pupils of compulsory school age are in receipt of a suitable education.

PWOs also work with other professionals such as Health and Children's Centre staff to promote regular school attendance for children in their Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception); Although there is no legislation for 3 and 4 year olds to attend school regularly, it is known that regular school attendance in these early years is crucial to a child's adopting of positive attendance and punctuality routines and future learning.

PWOs will assist in identifying and removing barriers which may be preventing a child receiving education through a number of ways, initially by undertaking individual casework with children of poor attendance and their parents/carers. The PWO will recognise and take account of individual circumstances and will respond accordingly.

#### **A Speedy return of the child to regular attendance will always be the prime concern.**

- In some instances, PWO intervention may be limited to a single PWO home visit in order to remind parent/carers of their legal responsibilities or to help resolve a particular difficulty.
- When, in some instances, there may be complex reasons why a child is not attending school the PWO may negotiate a plan of support. This might involve referring for involvement of other agencies through an assessment and holding multi-agency meetings. All PWO casework will involve close and continuous liaison with the pupil's school. PWOs will ensure that schools receive regular, written feedback on pupils with whom work is being undertaken.
- Where the main causes of non-attendance may be school-related (e.g. alleged bullying or racism, peer pressure, difficulties with a particular lesson or teacher) the PWO will discuss with the school in order to develop strategies to overcome these difficulties.
- The PWO will employ a range of strategies with the parent/carers in their casework to bring about the child's regular attendance and will, when necessary if no improvement occurs, refer the matter to the Magistrates Court.

#### **BLACKPOOL COUNCIL POLICY ON PROSECUTION**

Section 444(1) and (1)(a) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a pupil fails to regularly attend and attempts by the PWO and school fail to ensure the pupil returns to regular attendance, the PWO, on behalf of Blackpool Council, can consider taking legal action by issuing a summons against the parent/carers to appear before the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) / (1)(A).

**444(1)(a):** This is an “aggravated” and more serious, imprisonable offence. Parent/carers being summonsed to Court on this offence will have a criminal conviction recorded against their name.

**Blackpool Council Policy on the Use of School Attendance Order (SAO):** A SAO (under Sections 437-439 of the 1996 Education Act) will be served on the parent/carers of a child of compulsory school age if the parent/carers have failed to provide a suitable education and if the Children’s Services Authority believes that the child should attend school. The SAO will specify the school or Pupil Referral Unit which the child should attend. Should the parent/carers fail to comply with the SAO the Children’s Service Authority will initiate legal proceedings under Section 443 of the 1996 Education Act, unless the parents/carers can prove that the child is in receipt of suitable education).

### **Penalty Notices:**

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, the Student Support Team has the power to issue a Penalty Notice to the parents/carers of a child who fails to attend school regularly or punctually. Blackpool Council may also issue a Penalty Notice to the parents of a suspended child who is found in a public place during the first five days of suspension. Penalty Notices may only be issued in accordance with the terms of a local Code of Conduct.

Circumstances in which a Penalty Notice may be issued include:

- Truancy;
- Unauthorised holidays in term-time;
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed.

**The Governors of Park Community Academy have decided that Penalty Notices will be issued in appropriate circumstances.**

Following the guidance from the Department for Education (*Working together to improve school attendance* (19/8/2024))

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place at a rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).

### **School Responsibilities**

Under The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 all state funded schools must consider as soon as practicable, whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country. Judgements should be made by school taking into account the Working together to



improve school attendance statutory guidance, using a 'support first' ethos, except where this would not be appropriate for example, for unauthorised leave/holiday.

### **Local Authority Responsibilities**

Where a request for a penalty notice is made by a school, the Local Authority must consider if the notice should be issued in line with the national framework, the local code of conduct, the public interest and after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Local authorities must record where a penalty notice has been issued to an individual parent in respect of individual pupils and retain these records for at least 3 years from the date of issuing any notice in order for escalation procedures to be followed.

**Non-payment of the penalty within the 28-day time limit will trigger the prosecution process under the provisions of section 444 of the 1996 act or section 103 of the 2006 act, except where the notice is withdrawn**

**Children Missing Education (CME):** PWOs and schools have a clear role to play in helping to trace children who go missing from Blackpool schools or who go missing from schools from other authorities who may have moved into Blackpool.

Schools must follow corresponding procedures in relation to those pupils who are removed from school by their parent/carers without a named-school destination being provided and confirmed. Once a child has been confirmed as a registered pupil at another school the previous school will remove them from their school registers from the last day of attendance.

**Truancy Sweeps:** PWOs work closely with the Police in order to ensure that Truancy Sweeps, authorised under Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, are carried out according to the agreed Police and Children's Services protocol. PWOs liaise with Blackpool schools regarding Truancy Sweeps and staff members are encouraged to take part, as are partner agencies.

**Social Care:** If a referral is made and accepted by Social Care, an assessment of children in need will be undertaken in collaboration with other relevant professionals. The assessment will look at all aspects of the child's developmental needs, including their educational needs. PWOs will bring to the attention of social care staff children who have been referred to them due to attendance difficulties, who, in their professional opinion, may require additional support in accordance with Blackpool's safeguarding agenda as a child in need.

**Health Service:** Children who are absent from school for extended periods of time due to illness/injury may receive home tuition or tuition in a small group. The nature of the illness/injury must be confirmed by a Specialist/Consultant in these circumstances, stating that at that particular time the child is unfit to attend school. Park Community Academy has access to a School Nurse will discuss any health concerns that parents have for their child. Schools and PWO's can make referrals to the school nurse if a child is regularly absent through illness.

Should the child's school, parent/carers, PWO, etc consider that perhaps the problem of non-attendance may be linked to a mental health issue then consideration will be given to making a referral to Child and Adolescents Mental Health Service. (CAMHS) or the SHINE team. Where a mental health illness is evident the school or the PWO will take advice from CAMHS or the SHINE team on the best way to help a child achieve regular attendance.

**Regarding long-term absences due to mental ill health, school staff will work with families to support the learner's individual needs, considering any anxious feelings. Considering**

the medical evidence provided, PCA will facilitate relevant pastoral support available to improve attendance whilst supporting any underlying health issue.

In certain circumstances, a time-limited phase return may be put into place to support the learner's needs. In these instances, there would be a proposed end date with the ambition for the learner to return to school on a full-time basis.

### **Hierarchy for Excellent and Concerning Attendance and Punctuality**

#### **100%: Congratulations!**

The school recognizes and rewards pupils termly with 100% Attendance Certificate and a prize. We also celebrate 100% attendance for pupils across the school for the whole academic year.

All **Responsibility:** Family, School and Blackpool Children's Services.

#### **Above 97%: Well Done! Less than 6 days absence in a year**

Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly make the best learning they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

**Responsibility:** Family and School.

#### **95.5%: Good but 10 days absence in a year**

Still good! These pupils are likely to achieve good learning progress and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2 week holiday in the school term time can only achieve 95.5% attendance at very best! Schools to monitor and track pupil attendance

**Responsibility:** Family and School.

#### **90%: or below Concern with 20 days absence in a year (persistent absence)**

Young people in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be extremely difficult for them to achieve their best. They are at real risk of underachieving and developing poor attendance attitudes. The school will initiate an **Improving Attendance Contract** (See Appendix 1) to get these children on track with parent /carer support.

The Government classes children in this group as "Persistent Absentees". Parents of young people in this group could also face Fast Track, Penalty Notices or Legal proceedings being initiated against them if rapid and sustained improvement is not seen.

**Responsibility:** Family, School and PWO.

#### **Persistent Late Arrival at School**

Penalty Notices can be issued - £50 to be paid within 28 days increasing to £100 payable within 42 days. Legal proceedings for non-payments.

**Responsibility:** Blackpool's Legal Department, Family, School. Court proceedings ready.

Appendix 1



**Improving Attendance Contract**

Pupil	Parent/Carer	School Contact	Start Date:  Review Date:
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Reason(s) for absence/s:

Actions to be taken	By	What will happen?	How will we know it is working?
	School		
	Pupil		
	Parent/Carer		
	Other family members		
	Attendance support services		
	Other agencies		

Pupil attitude/approach to learning/specific needs:

<p>Possible issues preventing attendance – for example family situation, educational history, attendance history, current school concerns additional to attendance, knowledge of any support agencies currently working with the pupil:</p>
<p>Considered solutions discussed and agreed with pupil to improve attendance:</p>

PCA staff agree to comply with the requirements of the Improving Attendance contract until the review date.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

As parent/guardian I agree to comply with the requirements of the Improving Attendance contract until the review date.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 2




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"We grow together, we learn together, we will achieve our best together"

**Application by Parent/Carer for child's leave of absence from school during term time**

In line with the PCA attendance policy (<https://www.park.blackpool.sch.uk/about/policies>) Park Community Academy will not authorise any holiday in term time unless it is for exceptional

circumstance. Any leave of absence/family holidays should, be taken during school holidays. If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time, you should complete an application form, at least three weeks in advance, stating clearly the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time and outlining the social and educational benefits to your child.

PCA pays due regard to the value of travel as an important learning, experiential and life skills opportunity for children with special needs and will always try to support targeted residential opportunities that promote the social, emotional and physical development of the pupils.

The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission having given consideration to:

- Your child's age
- The time of year
- The overall attendance pattern of your child

Pupil Name: ..... Class: .....

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from PCA during the following dates:

Date of last day at PCA: ..... Date of return to PCA: .....

Total number of days missed: ..... Signed: .....

If you have completed a holiday form in the present Academic year, please give period covered:

.....

Please give reason why you are making this request in term time:

.....

Please outline the social and educational benefits you feel this absence will have for your child:

.....

Authorised YES / NO      Signed: .....(Headteacher)      Date:.....

Reason for decision:

A: Significant family event or emergency      B: Funeral / Bereavement      C: Appropriate to SEND needs D: Other.....

.....

If your application is refused and you still take your child out of PCA, the absence will be treated as unauthorised and could result in you receiving a penalty notice.