



# Attendance Policy



**Park Community Academy**

*Reviewed 01/21*

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 care and achieve their full potential.

It is important to all of us that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. School is where they learn and school is where they are safe. 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.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In order to improve levels of school attendance and punctuality, Park Community Academy is working in partnership with the 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.

## **WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/CARERS**

- 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.
- All children should have the same opportunity for learning in order to achieve their full potential.
- 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.

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 termtime

**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, 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, 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. Only one request per academic year will be considered for a maximum of 5 school days. 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 (e.g. RADA), disabled riding etc. 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

**Important: Leave of absence will only be considered when your child's overall attendance exceeds our Academy Attendance Target of 95.5%.**

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.

Pupil Welfare Service		Blackpool Council	Pupil Welfare Service	
ATTENDANCE FACT SHEET				
Days off school add up to lost learning!				
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.			

Schools must maintain attendance registers and accurately record and monitor all absence and lateness. 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 15% or more). Schools are responsible for supporting pupil attendance and respond quickly to difficulties and issues which might lead to non-attendance. In such cases, the school will consider putting an 'Improving Attendance Action Plan' (IAAP) in place. See Appendix 1.

Park Community Academy knows the crucial importance of early intervention. Clear procedures are in place to identify and follow up all absence and lateness from day 1. Parents unwilling or unable to co-operate will be reported to the Pupil Welfare Service.

Should a child regularly be absent through illness, or have 3 broken weeks in any term, the school will request that a parent/carer presents evidence, stating that their child is unfit to attend school, by the day that the child returns to school.

Where pupils have a number of medical appointments, the school will request confirmation of these appointments as evidence in completing the register.

## *Attendance Action Plan*

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. Also to meet overall targets as set out by Government and the school's Governing Body. This will be met by the Child and Family Support Team and the additional support of Park Community Academy staff.

<b>How</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
1. Parents/Carers of any new admissions to Park Community Academy will be made aware the School Policy on attendance whilst discussing the Home/School Agreement and also through the School Brochure.	Child and Family Support Team (CFST)
2. Daily monitoring of school registers.	CFST/Office Staff
3. First day contact where appropriate by text, phone or home visits.	CFST/Office Staff
4. Letters home to express concerns re: attendance/punctuality. Also regular reminder on school newsletter.	CFST/Office Staff
5. Meetings with parents to discuss concerns re: attendance/punctuality. Persistent absence will be managed through an IAAP (Appendix 1).	CFST Headteacher Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO)
6. 100% attendance and improvements in attendance will be recognised on a termly basis.	Park Community Academy Reward Schemes and external community resources. CSA 100% Attendance Awards

7. Regular screening will also take place throughout the school year and, if appropriate, we will target individual groups that continue to raise concern regarding attendance or punctuality.	CFST PWO
8. Referrals will be made to Pupil Welfare Officer when all the above processes seem to have failed.	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 such as meetings and attempted contact with parents by telephone, text and letters. A parent/carer may be contacted by a PWO if:

- 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; (See Appendix 1)
- 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.

### **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.

**Fast Track Initiative to Better Outcomes:** This involves less casework and a series of letters and meetings over 12 weeks to try and improve individual the pupil's school attendance. If no or little improvement occurs, a referral to the Magistrates Court will be made under Section 444(1).

**If a child/young person pupil still fails to attend school regularly, after a parent/carer has been prosecuted, the PWO will, if deemed appropriate, take further legal action.**

**Education Supervision Order (ESO):** Before initiating a prosecution under section 444(1) or (1)(A) of the 1996 Education Act, a PWO will consider whether it is appropriate to apply for an ESO under section 36 of the 1989 Children Act to the Family Court. The purpose of an ESO is to place a child/young person who is not being properly educated under the supervision of the Children's Services Authority as opposed to the parent/carer.

An ESO aims to ensure that the child/young person receives a suitable education and that they and the parent/carers receive intensive support, advice and guidance from a Supervising Officer who is required "*to advise, assist and befriend*". Should an ESO fail to bring about an improvement in the child's school attendance, the PWO can later use this in evidence in the Magistrates Court as a prosecution under Section 444(1) or 444(1)(a) of The Education Act 1996.

**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 an excluded child who is found in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. 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.**

This is a fine of £60 (if paid within 21 days of receipt) increasing to £120 which has to be paid within 28 days. **Should the fine not be paid the matter will be referred to the Magistrates Court under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996 as amended.**

**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. Each school has access to a School Nurse who holds 'drop ins' in schools for parents/carers to discuss any health concerns that they 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/carer, 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). Where a mental health illness is evident the school or the PWO will take advice from CAMHS on the best way to help a child achieve regular attendance.

## **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% 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%: Concern with 20 days absence in a year**

Young people in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best. They are at real risk of underachieving and developing poor attendance attitudes. School to develop action plans to get these children on track with parent / carer support.

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

### **85%: Safeguarding with 30 days absence a year. Persistent Absence.**

Young people in this group are missing six weeks of school per year; it will be extremely difficult for them to keep up with work and they are unlikely to achieve. The Government classifies 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. (See Appendix 1).

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

### **80%: Neglect with 40 days absence a year.**

Legal proceedings will be in operation. The child is at serious risk of underachieving and also being vulnerable to crime or safety concerns.

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

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

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:

Considered solutions discussed and agreed with pupil to improve attendance: