



**THE DEAN TRUST**  
Blacklow Brow School



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# Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2022 - 2023



Throughout this policy the term parent is used to refer to an individual who falls within the definition of section 576 of the Education Act 1996. This includes all biological parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children's Act 1989); and any person who although not a biological parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and looks after, irrespective of what that relationship is with that child.

- The Education Act 2005 inserted s444Za into the Education Act 1996, defining the term 'school' to include alternative provision that has been made for the child.

### Aims

Blacklow Brow aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 97% (**In the Green Zone**)
- **100% - Purple Zone - outstanding**
- **99% - 98% - Green Zone - Impressive**
- **97 – School target**
- **96% - Good**
- **95% - Nearly there**
- **94% -91% - Needs to improve**
- **90% + below – Serious cause for concern**
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

### Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attendees make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attendees find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attendees find learning more satisfying
- Regular attendees have an easier transfer to secondary school We will encourage good attendance in school by:
  - Accurately completing registers at the beginning of each session (morning and afternoon)
  - Giving out an award in assembly each week for the class with the best attendance.
  - Performing regular attendance checks.
  - Raising awareness of good attendance with leaflets home to parents/guardians. The leaflets are a visual reminder of the impact of poor attendance on a child's achievement.
  - Giving out rewards to children with improved attendance in a half term.
  - Giving out rewards (certificates, medals, trophies etc) for 100% attendance on a termly/annual basis.

- Giving pupils the chance to work with the Attendance Officer to improve attendance.
- Giving children attendance cards/diaries to focus their awareness (collect stickers for being in school and on time).
- Holding regular meetings between the School Attendance Officer and Inclusion Team.
- Working in partnership with the LA through initiatives to promote attendance.
- Meeting and working with parents whose children's attendance causes concerns

**As a parent you can help us by:**

- Ringing on the first morning of all absences before 10.00am with the reason and saying when the child will return 0151 477 8010
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks.
- Sending in a note explaining the reason for absence on your child's return to school after an illness
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness

Providing medical evidence for absences of 5 days or more

**We shall:**

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls, home visits and letters on the first day of absence • Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, school website, the school brochure and the Home-School agreement
- Give parents/carers letters relating to the impact of poor attendance/punctuality on their educational progress.
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his school report
- Let you know promptly if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance and/or punctuality
- Work hard to develop relationships with pupils and parents to overcome any barriers that may hinder regular attendance and/or punctuality.
- We will offer Early Help and develop pastoral support plans as needed.
- If we continue to have concerns we will work in a staged approach offering meetings with the head teacher and school governors.
- If no progress is made or there is lack of engagement the school will make a referral to the School Attendance Officer, who visits the school and pupils homes regularly to review and support attendance matters. Authorised Absence Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement or religious observance. We realise that there are rare occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically. Unauthorised Absence There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences" and are reported to the Local Authority.

**Examples of unauthorised absence are:**

- Waiting on a delivery

- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Shopping for new school clothes
- Unapproved Holidays
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory

A letter from a parent/guardian does not automatically authorise a child's absence from school as only the Head teacher can authorise an absence.

Reasons given by parents/guardians should be carefully considered and need not be accepted as authorising the child's non-attendance.

The parent/guardian may be requested to provide medical evidence in support of the reason for their child's absence. If a child returns to school with a note that provides a reason that cannot be authorised, school will contact the parent/guardian to discuss the reason and inform them that this has to be categorised as unauthorised.

If unauthorised attendance continues the Attendance Lead will liaise with School Attendance Service or the Headteacher. The School Attendance Service may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

## **Absence Procedures**

### **Home Visits:**

School staff may conduct 'Safe and Well' checks on any child absent from school. The purpose of these visits is to provide parents with help, advice and support.

### **First day Response of Absence:**

Parent to contact school to give the reason for absence. Attendance Lead will note the reason and inform the class teacher. If no reason is given the parent/guardian may be contacted by School Attendance Service or School via a home visit to obtain a valid reason for absence. (for first day response children, Attendance Lead will contact parent/guardian or School Attendance Service).

### **Penalty Notice Warning and Fine:**

A Penalty Notice Warning or Fine may be issued if a child has:

14 recorded sessions (7 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

Unauthorised absence due to truancy – including pupils stopped on truancy operations.

Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed).

Being found in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusion.

### **Persistent Absence**

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, **for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both.**

Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully

through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment. If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning.

#### **How We Respond To Persistent Absenteeism:**

- The Attendance Lead will monitor school attendance and punctuality and will liaise with Head Teacher.
- Using the information from Bromcom, children with (95.9%-Amber) and below may receive a letter setting out improvements that are required.
- Attendance Panels may be held and parents of children with poor attendance and/or punctuality will be invited to attend.
- Using the information from Bromcom and the class teacher's observations, the Attendance Lead will identify children whose attendance falls below the expected level (90%-Green zone) on a half termly basis. Cases will be identified for School Attendance Service and referred for intervention.

#### **Punctuality**

- Morning registration is at 8:55am. This is the time your child must be in the classroom, so you need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate by 8:45am.
- It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that if their child arrives late to school then they **MUST** come to the office and be accompanied by a responsible adult and marked into the late register.
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents. We may request that children who are late to school give up some of their lunch time to catch up missed work.
- Arrival after the close of registration at 9:20 am may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DfE guidance.
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.
- We expect all children to be picked up from school promptly. If there is an emergency and you cannot collect your child at the correct time please contact the school office before the end of the school day. Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be referred to a place of safety if not collected or the school contacted by school closing time. If a child is left in school at the end of the school day without the school being informed we will inform Children's Services (formally known as social services).

#### **How We Respond To Persistent Poor Punctuality:**

- Any child who arrives 30 minutes after close of registration will receive a 'late after close of registration' mark which deducts from their attendance and is classed as an unauthorised absence.
- Through analysis of the absence reports the Attendance Lead will identify those children whose punctuality is causing a concern.



- As above a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian to alert them of the number of occasions their child has been late in school during a half term. Once again an acknowledgement of receiving this letter is required and parents/guardians are given the opportunity to meet with the Attendance Lead and the Senior Leadership Team, to discuss any problems that may be affecting their child arriving at school on time.
- Some children may be given a target card to focus their attention to arriving in school on time
- As above if the problem persists with no signs of improvement. The School Attendance Service will be notified. A penalty notice may be appropriate if a pupil persistently arrives at school after the register has closed and has accumulated 14 unauthorised late marks within a period of no more than 10 weeks.

### **Term Time Leave of Absence**

We are always concerned about the amount of teaching time pupils miss as a result of absences. Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. School is also an essential component of safeguarding children. **There is no entitlement to time off in term time.** Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the head teacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governors

#### **It is our policy:**

- That only in very extreme, exceptional circumstances will leave of absence be granted.
- Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence in term time need to fill in an application form well in advance of the date and clearly state the reason for the absence. Please ask the school office for a form; the Schools attendance lead / Head Teacher will consider your request and advise you of his/her decision, (possibly asking to meet with you to discuss) further time than allowed will be unauthorised and you risk your child being taken off the school roll.
- If a Term Time Leave of Absence form is not completed and no contact can be made with the parents/carers regarding the child's whereabouts and/or safety, on the 10th day the pupil will be referred to the Authority as a Missing Pupil (See Children Missing Education).
- If the school does not agree and you take your child out of school, the absence will be unauthorised.
- A Penalty Notice can be issued in cases of unauthorised absence and in respect of a child who is a registered pupil at our school. Should a notice be unpaid and withdrawn, all those with parental responsibility may be liable for prosecution.
- Before a Penalty Notice is issued school will issue parents/carers a warning letter highlighting the recent/current unauthorised absence and warn of the likelihood of an Education Penalty Notice if the threshold is met
- The issuing of a Penalty Notice may be appropriate when there are at least 14 sessions (7 school days) lost to unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 10 weeks.
- Failure to ask the school for a Leave of absence, prior to a child being off (unless medical proof is shown) may also lead to a Penalty Notice being issued by the Knowsley School Attendance Service which could later lead to prosecution



- Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom

### **Looked after Children and Voluntarily Accommodated Pupils**

In respect of Looked after Children, the local authority will not make a request for a child/young person to take leave of absence during term time. Where a child or young person is voluntarily accommodated those persons holding Parental Responsibility will be advised of the likelihood of an Education Penalty Notice being issued should a leave of absence be requested.

### **Excluded Pupils**

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a legal duty on a parent in relation to excluded pupils. A parent is guilty of an offence under this Act where a child has been excluded from school (fixed term or permanent) and is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification within the first 5 days of the exclusion period. In some circumstances it may be necessary for a child to be in a public place during school hours on a school day e.g. pre-arranged medical appointment or emergency. Also a parent may need medical help and it is inappropriate for a child to be left at home if they are unable to make alternative arrangements.

### **Leavers**

- If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to High School, parents are asked to
- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, A new school and start date must be stated, and reasons for moving.
- Take our school's compliments slip so the new school can easily contact us and records be transferred
- Let us know when you move

**Remember:** We cannot take your child off our school roll until your child starts in the next school. Both **you** and the next school must inform us of the start date. Failure for you to inform us of a forwarding school will result in your child being classed as missing and we have to inform the local Authority and Police of their missing status.

### **Children Missing Education**

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information, and cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations under Safeguarding Procedures, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child. By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

### **Vulnerable Children**

Children who are Looked After (CLA), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN) will be treated with highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Officer. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home. Any outside professionals who are also working with the children and family will also be notified of the absence.



Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

### **Reluctant attenders/School Refusal**

You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse. **The school has a clear zero tolerance with respect to Bullying or similar behaviour** (See School's anti bullying policies and procedures)

### **What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning, promoting good routines. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. If child brings home a school diary each evening, please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day. Discuss school reward systems and how they can achieve them.

### **Parent Partnership**

The school cannot work in isolation. The partnership of school, parents and the Local Authority is fundamental, with all involved accepting responsibility and working together to improve attendance for the benefit of the pupils and the community. Prompt action on non-attendance and accurate and consistent registration are important areas of child protection.

Our school 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 that affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents, pupils and relevant support agencies 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. Early identification of needs and support required can prevent concerns escalating.

### **A statement of commitment from the Board of Governors**

This Attendance Policy is approved and endorsed by the BoG. All staff, pupils and their parents are made aware of the policy. Every Inclusion Governors meeting will include the topic of attendance and our school governors take an active interest in this area of the school's life.

The headteacher oversees this area of the school's life and reviews details on a weekly basis and takes proactive action. The headteacher is committed to ensuring that the resources required with respect to supporting attendance are always provided. The Head teacher and Board of Governors are committed to ensuring that monitoring is carried out with respect to attendance and achievement. This information will be used as necessary to inform and change policies, procedures and practice.

### **Legal Note**

There is a legal duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 for a parent to ensure that their child receives full time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude. The offence under section 444 relates to a child who is a registered pupil at our school and fails to attend regularly. In law a parent is guilty of an offence if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school that they are registered. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 Education Act 1996 or Section 36 Children's Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school.

This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with





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schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Penalty Notice (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

#### **Child Protection Statement**

At Blacklow Brow Primary School, we believe that every child has the right to be safe and therefore to be cared for in a way that ensures her/his safety and meets her/his individual needs. We recognise that all children need protection at all times from anything or anyone that may cause them harm and work together following the schools Safeguarding Policy to ensure this. We respect all members of the school's community and treat information with confidentiality. The above attendance policy is served in conjunction with our role to Safeguard All our Pupils.



### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made



<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend



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<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day