



# Blacko Primary School

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## Attendance Policy

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COORDINATOR: Miss Hind

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POLICY

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## 1. Introduction

Regular attendance at Blacko Primary School is essential to promote good education for all pupils. Staff at Blacko Primary School seek success for all with a passion for learning; teaching them that their attendance in school each day is vital to their learning. School will take appropriate action when necessary in order to promote the aims of this policy.

## 2. Aims:

- To maximise the attendance of all our children
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and Guardians to resolve any difficulties
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice
- To work closely the attendance support teams at county.

## 3. Expectations

### What is expected of parents:

- To keep their child's absences to a minimum
- To offer a valid reason for any period of absence or lateness
- To contact the school on the first day of absence and to keep school informed throughout the absence
- To ensure their child arrives on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a good condition to learn
- To work closely with the school and ~~the Education Welfare~~ Attendance Officer (EWO) to resolve any issues that may impede a child's attendance
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during times such as Assessment weeks and SAT's tests
- To support their child and recognise successes and achievements
- To keep school updated with changes to contact numbers or address details.
- Parents and Guardians must contact the school office as soon as possible and by 9.30am at the latest on the first morning of absence if their child is absent from school. A clear reason for the absence must be given an absence without reason will be recorded as unauthorised.

### What is expected of school:

- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance
- To develop procedures that enable school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- To consistently record absence within the guidance of the 1996 Education Act on the school absence log for all pupils.
- To develop a range of strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- To encourage communication between home and school
- To inform parents when a pupils attendance begins to be of concern.
- To work together with the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer to develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the Educational Welfare Officer LA Attendance Support teams.
- Referral to the Officer LA Attendance Support team can result in legal proceedings if poor attendance continues. Under the 1996 Education Act parents have a legal responsibility to ensure regular school attendance.

#### 4. Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

Blacko Primary School believes that it is important that parents/ Guardians, pupils, school staff and governors all work in partnership to encourage good attendance for all pupils. The following is a summary of the rights, roles and responsibilities for individual groups of stakeholders.

##### Parents and Guardians

- Ensure the child(ren) in their care attend school regularly and punctually
- If the child(ren) is/are absent to inform the school office on the first day of absence and provide a reason for the absence
- If the child(ren) is/are absent for more than one day, to inform the school office of the continued absence and update as to the reason for the absence regularly
- Ensure that school have up to date contact details and at least two emergency contacts who can be contacted in the event that parents are unavailable
- To avoid leave in term time wherever possible. Where this is not thought possible, contact the school as soon as possible prior to the first proposed day of absence to request authorisation and prior to making any financial commitment
- To advise the school, by contacting the school office, immediately if they become aware of problems with attendance
- To co-operate with the school in promoting and improving attendance e.g. attending meetings, participation in parenting contracts and supporting the school in agreed intervention/action plans
- Adhere to systems for late registration, signing out and signing in

##### Pupils

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Adhere to systems for late registration, signing out and signing in
- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school to ensure good attendance e.g. early bedtimes and getting uniforms ready the night before

##### School Staff

The head teacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are appropriate and efficient systems in place to promote and support the school attendance policy, that these are adhered to and training is given where appropriate. The head teacher is also responsible for liaison with individual families, the School Attendance Consultant and the Pupil Attendance Support Team (PAST) to ensure appropriate support is given where attendance concerns are identified and for liaison with the local authority and DfE to ensure that the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance.

However, Blacko Primary School believes that all staff have responsibilities and a role to play in promoting good attendance by:

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere for children
- Providing a safe learning environment
- Ensuring an appropriate and responsive curriculum
- Providing a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- Being aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- Being aware of the role all staff can play in ensuring attendance is seen as important for all pupils and parents
- Adherence to the systems and procedures in place within school to promote good attendance and highlighting any concerns to the head teacher
- Participation in training regarding school systems and procedures
- Willingness to communicate with children and parents about attendance
- Completion of the attendance registers in accordance with the legislation and under the direction of the head teacher

Some staff will have specific individual responsibilities to support the attendance policy and these are outlined in the procedures section of this framework.

## Governors

- Ensure compliance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended
- Adopt an attendance policy and review it annually and make changes if needed.
- Agree targets for attendance at Blacko Primary School
- Ensure that they receive reports from the head teacher regarding school attendance and persistent absence as part of the school monitoring or school profiling exercise
- Where the school is not meeting its attendance targets, or when the governors believe there is cause for concern, to require a review of the systems and procedures in place to promote good attendance
- To promote the strong link between attendance and educational attainment to parents and pupils where appropriate and ensure that the school attendance policy and procedures are communicated effectively
- Authorise the head teacher (or other designated person) to consider and make decisions regarding leave of absence requests
- Work with the head teacher in establishing criteria against which leave requests will be considered. This is important to ensure the process is equitable and consistent.

## 5. Registration

**8.50am** KS1 Children come in and get settled.

**9.00am -9.29am** KS2 come in and registration begins for the whole.(Are we able to change this to 8.55am for KS2 children)

**9.30am** Registration closes.

**1.00pm-1.29pm** Registration begins for the whole school.

**1.30pm-** Registration closes.

All registers must be completed electronically on Bromcoms.

Each class teacher or their nominated representative is responsible for marking children present or absent using the online system Bromcoms for both morning and afternoon registration. The registers must be completed promptly to avoid discrepancies between classes.

The school office is responsible for entering updated information on the electronic register and for inputting absence codes on a daily basis. Where they are not certain whether an absence is authorised or not they should seek advice from the head teacher.

Office staff may also use the comments facility within Bromcoms in order to log specific reasons for absence. This facility will allow school staff to monitor and manage developing patterns of absence more effectively and share such information with parents.

## 6. Lateness:

- 6.1 School begins at 9am with school doors being open from 8.50 for Key Stage 1. Lateness is classed as any child arriving between 9am and 9.30am when registers close. All children arriving after 9am must sign in as a late pupil using the school's signing in system and report to the school office.
- 6.2 Arrival after the registers close will result in the child receiving an unauthorised absence mark for that session (After 9.30am). Persistent levels of unauthorised absence due to lateness may result in a penalty notice being issued.
- 6.3 Lateness is monitored weekly and letters are sent home to the parents informing them of the lost lesson time and disruption caused to the child and the class as a whole. Persistent lateness will result in Parents being invited in to school for a meeting with the Head Teacher/Attendance Officer

## 7. Signing Out:

7.4 The school office is responsible for overseeing the procedure for releasing children where parents/Guardians have requested and been granted leave during the school day. It is the Parent/Guardians responsibility to ensure their child is signed out on the electronic system.

In accordance with current guidance, the attendance register is open between 9am -9.29am – 1pm and 1.29pm. This means that any pupil who arrives after the registration period **closes** will be given a late mark (L) in the register. This code is classed as a present mark, but displays that the pupil arrived late for school. Any pupil who arrives after the registers have closed after **(9.30am/1.30pm)** will be given a "late after registers closed" mark (U) in the register. This code is classed as an unauthorised absence but displays that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session.

In addition to using the L and U codes, office staff may also use the facility within the Bromcom attendance module to record the number of minutes late for each pupil, on each occasion. This facility will allow school staff to monitor and manage developing patterns of lateness more effectively and make a clear link between lateness and missed curriculum; and share such information with parents.

The fact that the U code is classed as an unauthorised absence means that when it is used pupils are likely to be missing significant amounts of schooling, putting their educational progress at risk. For this reason the use of this code will be considered as serious as any other unauthorised absence and will attract the interest of external agencies, including referral to the local authority attendance team and consideration of the use of legal measures, in just the same way.

## 8. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

In every instance it is the head teacher who determines whether an absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised. This decision is made based on information provided by parents/Guardians. However, because the register is a legal document, the head teacher has responsibility to ensure that it is completed accurately and in accordance with the legislation. For this reason it is not sufficient for an absence to be recorded as authorised based entirely on information provided by parents/Guardians. Therefore, there may be occasions when it will be necessary for parents to provide evidence of reasons for absence before authorisation is granted. For example, in the case of absence due to illness or medical appointment, evidence may be requested in the form of: sight of a prescription, prescribed medication, a medical appointment card or similar.

The school office is responsible for maintaining records of reason and length of absence.

- Parents/Guardians are required to contact the school office on the first day of absence, advising of the reason for the absence and expected return date; if known
- Where information is provided to the class teacher they are responsible for passing this information to the school office
- Where a verbal message is taken by school office staff this should be entered on the absence log
- Where a written note is received by the class teacher this should be returned to the school office
- Where the absence is for several days, the parent/Guardian is responsible for informing the school of the continued absence and updating them as to the reason for the absence on a regular basis
- Where no explanation for absence is provided, or the reason provided is unsatisfactory, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised
- Schools have a responsibility to report such absence to the local authority after a period of 10 school days, or sooner if appropriate
- The reason for absence should be linked directly to the pupil (e.g. illness or medical appointment of/for the child). Reasons for absence relating to parents or siblings may not be authorised

If a child is absent and no contact has been made by the family, the school office will contact the family on the first day of absence, as the registers close at 9.30am. If contact cannot be made, school will try to contact the people named as emergency contacts. Where reasonably practicable, for every pupil, schools should hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. Our school will request emergency contact numbers from the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. If no contact is possible with any of the emergency contacts, the head teacher should be informed and consideration made whether to request/undertake a welfare/home visit. In the case of prolonged or repeated absence without justification being given, the head teacher will determine whether a referral to the Pupil Attendance Support Team should be made.

The head teacher is responsible for determining what is classed as authorised and what is classed as unauthorised absence.

### Examples of authorised absence:

- Medical or dental appointments, which relate directly to the pupil and unavoidably fall during the school day (evidence may be required prior to authorisation)
- Illness of the pupil (evidence may be required prior to authorisation)
- Leave which has been authorised by the head teacher due to exceptional circumstances

### Examples of unauthorised absence:

- Parents/Guardians keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and leave in term time which have not been agreed
- Days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the head teacher
- Holidays in term time, shopping, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, parent/s unwell.

## 9. Leave of Absence

Following the September 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, schools cannot authorise any leave other than in exceptional circumstances. Kate Richards, the schools head teacher is the person authorised by the 'proprietor' (i.e. the governing body), to make this decision. If the leave is being requested for a holiday, approval should be obtained prior to making any bookings.

Leave of absence **SHALL NOT** be granted unless:

- a request for leave has been made in advance, by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and
- the head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES** relating to the request.

### Religious Absence

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, e.g. Eid, (i.e. the day set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member) and this will be marked as 'R' in the register.

Parents must request any additional leave in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

### Pupils Who Are Unable To Attend School for Medical Reasons

The introduction of statutory guidance on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 places much more emphasis on the role of governing bodies in ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils; whether their condition is short or long term. The school will work with parents and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be as a result of specific practices or resources used within school or by sourcing more appropriate provision at another establishment. When education is to be provided at an alternative location, this will always be done via the use of a direction or notice (please see the relevant section of this policy).

### Term Time Holidays:

The law states that any holidays taken in term time will be marked as unauthorised absence and may also result in a penalty notice being issued. A Penalty Notice for unauthorised holidays during term time will be issued if a pupil is absent for a minimum of 5 school days for an absence relating to holidays during term time. The Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave during term time will be issued without the issue of a warning. The penalty is £60 per child, per parent.

### Use of Penalty Notices –

In accordance with the current Lancashire code of conduct, Blacko Primary School will request that the local authority issue penalty notices in respect of unauthorised absence. This includes leave of absence which is taken without a prior request being made; and leave taken after a prior request has been made and parents have been informed that the period of absence would be classed as unauthorised but the leave is taken regardless of this advice. Blacko Primary School will also request that the local authority issue a penalty notice for days taken in excess of the agreed period of leave; without good reason.

## **10. Response to Absence:**

- 10.1 If any child has not been registered or the school has not been notified about a child's absence, the office will contact parents by telephone and a message will be sent via the text system.
- 10.2 On the second day of absence procedure 6.1 will be followed and a telephone call home will be made
- 10.4 At the end of the week, if no absence reason has been received, then school will try to make contact with the family via a home visit. It is also possible at this stage that a referral to Child Care Services may be made as the child will not have been seen in school.
- 10.5 At each stage of this process, parents are welcome to speak to the headteacher if they have specific concerns or issues.

## **11. The Education Welfare Service: LCC ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM**

- 11.1 Blacko Primary School works together with the LCC Attendance Support Team to improve the attendance of all our children. Our target attendance is 96% and whilst the majority of our children achieve this, there are a number who do not. There are different strategies used by the LCC Attendance Support Team and the school to support families and raise awareness of the importance of school attendance. These range from informal visits, target days, penalty notices and ultimately court action.
- 11.2 The staff at Blacko Primary School work to ensure that any attendance issues or concerns can be resolved long before court proceedings start.

## **12. Persistent Absentees:**

- 12.1 A child who has an attendance figure below the 90% threshold are classed as a persistent absentee and may be referred to the LCC Attendance Support Team.
- 12.2 Parents of persistent absentees will be invited to a panel meeting with the Head Teacher/Attendance Officer to discuss their child's attendance.
- 12.3 Parents who fail to attend a panel meeting will receive a home visit from the Teacher/Attendance Officer.
- 12.4 Where the absences continue parents will be served with a penalty notice which may lead to court action.
- 12.5 A child who has an attendance percentage between 85% and 90% will be closely monitored and will be referred where their attendance is a cause for concern.

## **13. Monitoring and Evaluation:**

### Daily

- 13.1 Contact must be made by Parents/Guardians of all pupils absent from school.
- 13.2 Letters are sent to parents whose children are absent where they have not provided school with a sufficient reason.

## Half Termly

13.3 Traffic Light letters are sent home to inform parents of their child's attendance on a regular basis  
Yearly

13.4 100% attendance certificates presented in the final assembly and all pupils rewarded

## **14. Monitoring, Analysis, Action Planning**

Blacko Primary School will use electronic systems for monitoring attendance at both individual pupil, groups of pupils and whole school level. We will analyse patterns and trends of non-attendance to inform future action planning and target setting in respect of whole school attendance matters.