



Dear Parents/Carers,

### **School Attendance**

We are writing this special letter to you about attendance to provide you with a clear outline about absence procedures and the School and Local Authority responses to poor pupil attendance. The Governors have made it clear that they will support the Headteacher and Local Authority in promoting high levels of attendance and taking action where there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence.

Poor school attendance can impact upon your child's academic, social and emotional development. Blackburn Central High School is working hard to ensure that the levels of attendance remain high and does not impact on your children's progress at school. However, we appreciate there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This letter explains the approach we are following to support excellent attendance.

It is crucial that pupils are in attendance at school as often as possible to take full advantage of learning opportunities.

- We know from research that even the slightest drop in attendance can impact on the outcomes of pupils at GCSE.
- Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education.
- Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind.
- Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary

school.

**The table below demonstrate how much impact having time off school, has on pupil outcomes/grades in year 11. If a pupil attends 95% or more they are more like to have positive progress, higher attainment and a higher number of GCSE Grades that a are above 4.**

Whole school attendance across 5 years				
Attendance	Progress 8 5 year attendance	Attainment 8	Average number GCSEs 4+	% Basics 4+
More than 94.99%	0.22	5.14	6.31	81%
More than 89.99%	-0.09	4.41	5.46	71%
More than 84.99	-0.23	3.93	6.00	50%
Less than 80 %	-2.13	1.96	2.13	25%

**Positive progress** means they are achieving more than their expected grade

**Negative progress** means they are achieving less than their expected grade

Aspire and achieve

### What we are aiming for

Average attendance would be around 95% for the year, with outstanding attendance above 96%.

The percentage attendance may seem high at 90% (we would celebrate this in an exam) **but** this is 19 days off school, nearly 4 weeks across a full year, even more scary **95 hours of lost learning**.

This is why attendance impacts on pupil progress.

Descriptor	Threshold attendance	Actual attendance	Whole days absent	Learning hours lost
Outstanding	100%	190 days	0	0
	99%	188 days	2	10
Good	98%	186 days	4	20
	97%	184 days	6	30
	96%	182.5 days	7.5	37.5
Cause for concern	95%	180.5 days	9.5	47.5
	94%	179 days	11	55
	93%	177 days	13	65
	92%	175 days	15	75
Unsatisfactory	91%	173 days	17	85
	90%	171 days	19	95
	89%	169 days	21	105
	88%	167 days	23	115
Serious Concern	87%	165 days	25	125
	86%	163 days	27	135
	85%	161.5 days	28.5	142.5
Critical	84%	159.5 days	30.5	152.5
	83%	158 days	32	160
	82%	156 days	34	170
	81%	154 days	36	180
	80%	152 days	38	190

### What is considered as poor attendance?

Anything below 94% is weak, under 90% is poor and if attendance dips below 85% we will have serious concerns. Below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE. In this school, we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 95%. We monitor attendance and provide termly reports on each pupil's attendance.

Throughout the terms, we identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen and issue a warning letter and/or make a telephone call informing parents. We then monitor the pupils' attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of improving attendance within weeks of no absence developing.

### Our duty of care in responding to unauthorised and persistent absence – possible consequences

We have a duty of care, shared with the Local Authority, to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance levels are low and where there are invalid reasons for a pupil's frequent absence or where parents condone absence (e.g. by taking children out of school on unauthorised holidays) a fast track prosecution could commence.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that the child attends before and returns to school after the appointment. Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support – for example by involving the School Health Service.

### **Holidays**

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time. Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence may be reported as a matter of concern to the Local Authority; we are under a duty to do this.

### **Close of Registers**

The AM register closes at 9:00. Any child arriving after this will incur an unauthorised absence. Please ensure your child is in school by 8:30am ready to start the school day. A free breakfast club is available from 8:00am.

I hope that these notes will help you to have a clear understanding about the School's attendance expectations. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have about maintaining, supporting and improving your child's attendance record. If you are experiencing any difficulties regarding your child's education, I would welcome the opportunity to advise and support you.

Yours sincerely  
Mrs Ellahi