

# THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL GROUP LTD

## Attendance Policy



<b>Author:</b>	<b>AF</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> September 2024</b>
<b>To be reviewed:</b>	<b>Sept 25</b>
<b>Reviewed:</b>	May 2007, May 2008, May 2009, May 2010, Mar 11, Nov 2011, April 2012, September 2013, June 2014, Nov 2015, Jan 2018, Feb 2020, April '21; March '22, Sept '22; May 23; Sept 23; Sept 24
<b>Version:</b>	<b>19</b>

**Applicable to: ALL staff working for TAS**

- Other relevant policies & documents:
  - Safeguarding Policy
  - IEP's
  - Pupil Individual Risk Assessments
  - 10 Point Assessment
  - Personalised Timetables
  - Service Level Agreement
  - Admissions Registers
  - Behaviour Watch
  - 6 Weekly Reviews
  - Parent Induction Pack

## Intro -

When it comes to school attendance, **Every Single Day Matters.**

At TAS, we are committed to encouraging and supporting excellent attendance from all our pupils, by offering an environment in which pupils feel safe, valued and part of the school community. If pupils are unable to access a TAS school, for whatever reason, it is our duty to ensure that our pupil receives a personalised IEP and timetable which ensures that they have access to an education programme. No pupil is exempt from this.

This may mean that we need to start very small, from a starting point that our pupils are happy with, encouraging our pupils to reach 100% straight away of their personalised timetable.

Regular school attendance is essential if young people are to make the most of the educational and extra-curricular opportunities available to them at TAS. Irregular attendance disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, leads to underachievement and low attainment but is also a safeguarding concern.

The baseline for good practice lies with the school pastoral systems and an attendance policy which clearly sets out staff roles and responsibilities for dealing with attendance including links to the school's behaviour for learning and anti-bullying policies.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Monitoring school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Promote and support punctuality in attending lessons
- Reviewing timetables every 6 weeks
- Review meetings with pupils, parents and agencies every 6 weeks
- **Listening to the voice of the child**
- **Starting from a realistic starting point and gradually working towards a full-time offer and transition**

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996; 1999; 2002; 2004; 2010 and 2014 amendments
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002 and 2003 amendments
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006; 2007; 2009 and 2010 amendments
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006; 2010; 2011; 2013 2016; 2023 and 2024 amendments.
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Amendment Regulations 2013 and 2024 amendments.

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.

## Policy –

TAS constantly monitors pupils' attendance and aims for 100% attendance each and every week. (Pupils are encouraged to stay beyond their timetabled hours, take part in additional activities organised by school, work experience, but also activities outside of school too).

TAS monitors 2 types of attendance –

- 1) Attendance of the personalised timetable, and this is measured in % for the week. Each day attended as per the personalised timetable, counts as 20%. If a pupil attends all of their personalised timetabled hours, this is to be celebrated and they have achieved 100%. If a pupil attends 3 days out of the 5, they achieve 60%. ALL pupils must be timetabled for 5 days education and this links into our safeguarding ethos.
- 2) Attendance in the legal form, and this is measured in two sessions as per DfE guidance, by a morning, afternoon or full day attendance. This is how mainstream education measures attendance, as a normal school day operates between 9am – 3.00pm. All children in main school are expected to attend a full day which is shown by a / \ mark, marking the two sessions each day.
- 3) A morning would mean /, an afternoon would mean \. To gain 100% in mainstream, a pupil would need to attend both the morning and afternoon. This attendance is difficult for TAS to use when comparing against other schools, especially when our pupils all attend a personalised timetable, however it is a legal requirement set by the DfE and is a requirement by the local authorities and the referring schools.
- 4) In TAS, pupils who attend 8.30pm – after 12.00pm, will receive a mark for two sessions and will be marked as ^
- 5) In TAS, pupils who attend 1.00pm, will receive a mark for one session and will be marked as \

When reporting attendance to local authorities and schools, please ensure you are reporting both forms of attendance with additional notes. Attendance should be documented as both in all reports/reviews and a clear comparison made.

**It is the intention for all pupils to start with a personalised timetable and be aiming for 30 hours a week and transition into the next step.**

## **Absences -**

The only valid reasons for absence are:

- Genuine illness/injury (not minor ailments)
- A family emergency
- Religious observance – as agreed by the school.

Family holidays are not permitted to be taken during term time. Medical appointments must be taken out of school time but, where this is not possible, pupils should attend school before or after the appointment, and proof of the appointment is required – this must be shown to the headteacher. **Medical appointments should not normally take all day.**

**For CLA**, holidays can only be authorised by the social worker. However, we would strongly insist that holidays are not taken within term time. Any time off school, more than 1 day at a time must be reported to the social worker.

Pupils attending TAS are expected to arrive on time to their allocated session as given to them on their timetable. Pupils who arrive up to 10 minutes late will be allowed straight into class with a mark, providing that they have notified their teacher in advance with a valid reason. If pupils arrive after the first 10 minutes, but within the first half of an hour, they will be allocated a late mark and allowed into class. Once the register has closed, (after the first 30 minutes), any pupil arriving at this stage will receive an unauthorised code U: arrived in school after register closed and an explanation sought from parents or guardians.

At TAS we have a first day of absence contact policy and if a parent/carer knows that their child will be absent (or late) they should contact their child's teacher directly or the school's Business Manager between 8.30am - 9.00am to report the absence or late arrival on:- **01282 851800**.

**All absences must be reported on the first day of absence.**

The procedure for absence is as follows:

<b>DAY</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	
Day 1	<p>If no sign of pupil within 30 mins of registration, a text will be sent to parent/carer and followed up at the end of the session with a phone call.</p>	<p>If contact is made with pupil or parent -this should be logged in the contact log and positive persuasion given to ensure attendance immediately and certainly for Day 2.</p> <p><b>If no sign and no contact made with pupil or parent – a home visit must be made by a member of staff.</b></p> <p><b>If the pupil or parent cannot be located and you have concerns over safety, you must report this to your DSL immediately.</b></p> <p>Your DSL will then work with you to locate pupil/and parent and if no contact can be made, your DSL will report to children’s social care (CSC).</p>
Day 2	<p>If no sign of the pupil, phone home and ask to speak to the pupil too. If no contact is made with the pupil on day 2 or the previous day, start asking questions and challenge the parent or carer on their responses if necessary.</p> <p>Seek current address/whereabouts of pupil and a home visit must be made to ensure pupil safety. This visit must be made even though it may be a new address, and lone policy guidance followed.</p>	<p><b>If no contact with pupil and only parent made, and concerns after a home visit, report immediately to DSL.</b></p> <p><b>Further investigation is needed by the DSL as to whereabouts, using info in the red folder / social media.</b></p> <p><b>Your DSL may report this further to the police and or CSC.</b></p>

**NOTE: A lack of contact with both pupil/parent/carer for more than 24 hours is considered a SAFEGUARDING concern and appropriate action MUST be taken. Each TAS school has a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).**

The lead DSL's for the whole school group is Kirsty Swierkowski, the Deputy DSL for the whole group is Mark Walton. If you cannot speak to your DSL immediately, contact Kirsty Swierkowski or Mark Walton.

You **MUST NOT** leave your concern, – report it on the day.

**If you feel your concern is NOT being listened to or taken seriously, you must contact the group lead DSL, Kirsty Swierkowski on 07980 284372 and report immediately. Do not leave safeguarding concerns under any circumstance until you are satisfied that the young person is safe. This sometimes means that you have to be quite assertive in your approach to CSC, however you should follow the TAS Safeguarding Policy e.g. seek guidance from your Headteacher, if not available DSL, if not available DDSL, if not available the one of the school's lead DSL's, or Children's Social Care. You DO NOT stop until you are satisfied that the pupil is safe.**

## **Absence and Attendance Codes**

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration.

Pupils **MUST** log themselves in using the class sign in sheet and marked in by the class teacher.

This attendance is then uploaded onto the campus central system by the end of each day.

If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

### **Legal Registration codes to be used**

Present in school / = am (anytime up until 12.00pm)

Present in school \ = pm (anytime from 12.00pm)

am timetable = 8.30am-12.30pm (this would mean a double mark of / \)

pm timetable = 12.30pm - 4.30pm (this will mean a single mark of \)



## **Attendance Codes -**

### What to do if a pupil arrives late

Code L: Late arrival within 30 minutes of registration.

Code U: Late arrival after 30 minutes of registration.

### What codes to use if pupils are off site:

Code B: Another approved educational activity

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in an approved sporting activity (e.g. ISA football competition)

Code V: Educational visit or trip arranged by the school (e.g. MOSI)

Code W: Work experience. Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education.

### What codes to use if a pupil is not in school or an activity:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school. ONLY exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Code C can only be authorised by the Headteacher.

Code C2: For pupils on a part-time timetable

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school Head

Code I: Illness (where pupil's health need means that need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, schools can seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the pupils and identify the most suitable provision in line with the statutory guidance in supporting pupils at school with medical conditions or arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs).

Code M: Medical or dental appointments. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence.

Code R: Religious observance Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance.

Code S: Study leave Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave can only be authorised by the Headteacher.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.

Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. **Code N must be replaced with the correct absence code by the Friday of each week.** If no reason determined this must be replaced by the letter O.

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code Q: Lack of access arrangements in place

The following codes can be used to record absence but are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Un-timetabled session.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – e.g. enforced closure

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register. This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. TAS Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

## **Aim of this policy**

It is the aim of all TAS staff to encourage and support each young person to gain 100% plus, attendance of their personalised timetable. It is essential for pupils to stay within their allocated time frame and to attend every day to make sure they achieve their full potential. Each timetable is individually developed for each young person to ensure the quality, personalised teaching that each of our young people require.

This timetable is reviewed every 6 weeks with pupil, parent/carer and all agencies involved.

## **Leaving TAS early**

When arriving and leaving TAS it is vital that all pupils sign in and sign out. This is a statutory requirement to protect each child's safety in the case of an emergency.

In incidents where a young person is taken ill in class a parent or carer will be contacted by a member of staff. Pupils should not contact parents/carers themselves (without the teacher's permission) and must never leave school without permission.

If a young person leaves TAS before the teaching session is finished with or without permission a phone call, as appropriate, will be made informing the parent/carer that their child has left school. If the call is not answered directly, then a text message should be sent.

Remember: Sign out of class register

## **Study Leave**

Study leave can only be granted once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete, and study leave should only ever be granted to pupils in year 11 and **can only be granted by the Headteacher of each campus. This MUST not be granted before the last Friday in June.**

**TAS pupils are NOT usually granted full study leave after this date due to safeguarding and can only be issued 3 days study leave upon full completion of their qualifications and in agreement with parent/carer and agencies supporting the child.**

## Completing Registers

Pupils complete a sign in sheet every day for when they sign in and out and this must be completed by each individual, not by peers. **It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure these are signed and stored securely.**

Each class on-line register must be completed by the class teacher electronically ideally within 15 minutes of the start of the session. At the end of each lesson, it is the class teacher who will follow up all late arrivals and all absences with parents and carers and determine the reason for absence and late arrival in line with safeguarding procedure.

All information must be updated daily on - signing in sheets, TAS electronic register and Behaviour Watch.

Note: Both the legal and TAS personalised attendance should be recorded.

## Contents of Admission Register *(This is the responsibility of the SBM)*

The admission register must contain the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, a 2<sup>nd</sup> contact and details of the school last attended.

Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry on the Attendance and Admissions Registers must be kept by the school for a **minimum of 3 years** after the date the entry was made.

## Referring Schools

Attendance reports for each pupil are e-mailed to the referring school/agency by the lead/Head teacher every Friday, and a summary is produced by the class teacher as part of the weekly 'Friday Analysis'. These reports show each pupil's weekly % attendance, and an overall summary of the pupil's progress.

## Attendance Data Analysis

Attendance data is analysed by the School Business Manager at the end of every week and certificates of praise for attendance above 95% are issued as part of the Friday Celebration.

As a school committed to improving attendance, each teacher will RAG rate attendance on a weekly basis.

**95% + = GREEN = Pupil Certificate of Attendance issued.** (*template 1 attached*)

**90% - 95% = AMBER = An amber letter sent to parents/guardians.** (*template 2 attached*)

**90% and below = RED = A red warning later sending home.** (*template 3 attached*)

**Between 85% below 95% will result in a phone call home by the class teacher.**

There is a summary page for Attendance per school and this RAG rate must be added each week.

Whole School Analysis will be analysed by the Head teacher/SBM every half-term and presented to the Executive Head, as requested. Attendance targets and data are displayed in each classroom and in the office.

It is the responsibility of each campus Headteacher to monitor attendance on a weekly basis to check safeguarding and any issues discussed in a weekly team meeting.

Where attendance does not improve over a 2-week period, parents/carers will be invited into school for an attendance meeting with the Headteacher. At this meeting a joint plan between school / parent/ any agencies will be formulated and this may involve a revised timetable/curriculum /teacher or campus. Following this meeting attendance will be closely monitored for a period of 10 sessions and if no improvement is shown the Local Authority legal process will be followed.

If the meeting is not attended a home visit will be made by the class teacher and/or a member of the Management team, and if necessary legal process will be followed by the referring local authority.

Every attempt will be made by TAS to build on relationships, review the timetable and encourage attendance before approaching the local authority attendance support team and issuing a fine to parents. It must be pointed out in the 1:1 parent induction, that TAS will liaise with the local authorities to pursue this if necessary.

## **Children Missing Education (CME)**

The term 'missing education' means a child who is not registered at a school (or an alternative arranged by the council), and who is not receiving a suitable education at home. In line with current advice and legislation, in cases where pupils are being removed from roll, we will make contact with the new school, home and/or social worker, when possible, and inform the appropriate local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g., home education.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered.
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period or,
- Have been permanently excluded.
- Pupils will not be removed from the register until they are placed onto the next provider school register, and we have received confirmation from that school.

The local authority should be notified in advance of the deletion, when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made.

**Lancashire County Council** -Guidance and forms for schools to report removal from roll, and withdrawal from school to home educate are available on the [Schools Portal](#), using the online form or by contacting:

The Education Support Centre  
Union Street  
Chorley  
Lancashire  
PR7 1EB  
Tel: 01257 517333  
Email: [cme@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cme@lancashire.gov.uk)

**North Yorkshire County Council-**  
[datamanagement.officer@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:datamanagement.officer@northyorks.gov.uk)

**Blackpool Council-**  
[Head of Access 01253 476552](tel:01253476552)

## **Children Missing Out in Education (CMOIE)**

The term CMOIE means a child who is registered at a school (or an alternative arranged by the council), but who is not receiving their full entitlement of full-time education. In a mainstream setting, this is 25 hours/week for secondary and 30 hours/week for primary. At TAS, we provide a personalised assessment, IEP and Timetable for every pupil that is reviewed half termly. Our full-time offer is 20 hours/week for secondary and 25 hours/week for primary and states this in our SLA. All pupils that attend TAS are aiming for a minimum of 20 hours a week and work through a structured programme, increasing hours and aiming for this benchmark.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Parents/Carers**

- Parent Induction - read or listen to and sign the parent/carer/pupil/school agreement
- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of their absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Keep school informed during continued absence.
- Attend parent/carer/professional review days at the school with the pupil's class teacher every half term.
- Avoid taking holidays in term time.
- If, due to exceptional circumstances, special leave is to be sought, ensure sufficient prior notice is given, i.e., a minimum of two school weeks.
- Make early contact with school where parents/carers become aware of problems with attendance.
- Build a positive relationship with the school headteacher
- Attend meetings if concerns are identified.
- Participate in attendance parenting contracts where appropriate.
- Support the school in agreed interventions/action plans.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

### **Pupils**

- On entry sign the pupil induction booklet
- Attend school regularly and on time.
- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school, e.g. early bedtimes, preparation of homework and equipment to ensure punctual arrival with the correct equipment.
- Adhere to systems for late registration and/or early departure.

- Never leave school without permission.
- Speak to teacher/parents/carers if issues arise which have an effect on school attendance.
- Build a positive relationship with your teacher
- Play an active part in your reviews
- Co-operate and participate in interventions and support offered by the school or other agencies to improve attendance and/or punctuality.

## Staff

The Head Teacher will:

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school.
- Analyse campus attendance on a weekly basis.
- Monitor the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Ensure that there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Request Penalty Notices as appropriate.
- Involve relevant outside agencies where a family is unable or unwilling to engage with school staff.
- Train the team on how to complete registers.

Teachers will:

- Complete the register for that class by the end of that session.
- Ensure that registers are correctly completed using the correct code to indicate presence/absence/late on a daily basis.
- Promote attendance, and its link to educational attainment, regularly in class and on Parents'/Carers'/Professional Days.
- Ensure an appropriate and engaging curriculum.
- Be aware of factors which could contribute to absence.
- Keep dated records of information received from parents/carers/professionals regarding pupil absence.
- Call or text the parent/carer within 30 minutes if pupil doesn't arrive.
- Carry out home visits as required as per this policy.
- Complete pupil contact sheet on a daily basis.
- Promote 100% attendance for safeguarding purposes regardless of learning or Homelife barriers.

All staff will:

- Provide a welcoming environment for all our young people, remembering MASLOW's hierarchy of needs.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Adhere to all relevant policies including Safeguarding, Behaviour for Learning, Anti-bullying, etc.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil concerns.
- **See pupils' attendance as their responsibility.**



- Participate in any relevant training.
- Ensure attendance remains high profile in all areas of school.

TAS Management Team and Executive Head will:

- Adopt an attendance policy and review it with staff every year.
- Will ensure every teacher has a mobile phone to enable contact with pupils and parents/carers/professionals.
- Will ensure that attendance is a key priority throughout the whole school meeting structure (pupil voice, PTA, team meeting, heads meetings, senior management meetings, whole school inset, pupil induction pack, staff induction pack and parent induction pack).
- Take advice from the Lancashire Attendance Consultant (Karl Turner).

SBM will:

- Analyse whole school attendance each half term.
- Discuss weekly attendance figures with the Headteacher.
- Monitor and analyse attendance data every half term.
- Provide centres with detailed analysis to ensure attendance figures maintained.
- Send half termly praise and concern letters to parents/carers.
- Contact home with any concerns about absence or punctuality using agreed letter(s).
- Provide referring schools with weekly and half termly attendance data.
- liaise with TAS Senior Managers.
- Liaise with and pass on information, as appropriate, to the CME team.

TAS School Management team will:

- meet every four weeks to identify, discuss, feedback and plan actions for identified 'at risk' pupils.
- liaise with appropriate staff and outside agencies.
- submit CAF referrals as appropriate.
- support staff in working with 'at risk' pupils.
- identify and organise attendance meetings for pupils at risk of persistent absenteeism (PA).
- organise reintegration meetings and programmes for pupils returning to school after long absences.
- feedback information to class teachers.
- work with class teachers to organise Attendance Panel Meetings and Parenting Contracts.
- keep all staff, parents and pupils updated about any changes to attendance and PA legislation, including national targets and up dated strategies.

## **Additional Information for Parents/Carers**

### **Authorised Absence**

The following **may** be authorised by the school:

- Entertainment (where a child performer has a license for taking part in a performance).
- Leave in term time (you should ask permission first, by law, the school can only authorise in exceptional circumstances).
- Short term emergency.
- Certain days for religious observation.
- Bereavement.
- Illness or Injury.
- Hospital treatment.

**If possible, notify the school of any issues that may affect your child's attendance before the absence occurs.**

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Unacceptable reasons for absence include:

- Shopping
- Holidays in term time which are not authorised by your child's school
- Hair cut
- Truancy
- Airport visits
- Birthday treats
- Days out / trips
- Looking after brothers, sisters or other family members at home
- Non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- Oversleeping
- Working

**Please note that the decision to authorise absences rests with schools and not parents/carers.**

### **Term time pupil leave**

Attendance regulations in England changed in September 2013 removing the former notional limit of 10 days that Headteachers could authorise for children to be absent from school during term time for family holidays. All term time pupil leave applications in England have to now be on '**exceptional grounds**' in line with the regulations. Headteachers have the discretion to grant leave, but they can only do so in exceptional circumstances. If a Headteacher authorises a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

In the instance of a Child Looked After (CLA), as a school we are unable to authorise term time absences, these can only be authorised by a Social Worker.

Parents can be prosecuted and fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

## **Attendance: Persistent Absence Threshold**

- **All pupils should be aiming for 100% attendance and at least 95%**
- Persistent Absentees are those pupils who have more than 10% absence, i.e., less than 90% attendance.
- School-age pupils are persistent absentees if they miss more than 10% of sessions in a school year.
- The Department for Education's (DfE) Persistent Absence threshold is now 10% from September 2015. If a pupil's overall absence rate is 10% or higher of their possible sessions, they're classified as a persistent absentee. A 'session' is 1 morning or afternoon in school.
- 95% attendance = 19 days (3 weeks and 4 days) missed education
- 80% attendance = 38 days (7 weeks and 3 days) missed education
- 70% attendance = 57 days (11 weeks and 2 days) missed education
- 60% attendance = 76 days (15 weeks and 2 days) missed education
- 50% attendance = 95 days (19 weeks) missed education

## **Legal Interventions**

If all attempts by the school to increase attendance above 90% have failed, then legal intervention will be implemented.

Each case will be considered individually by the campus headteacher however as a school we will follow local council guidelines as follows.

- If no improvement has been seen at the first stage, the school is to issue a fixed penalty notice.  
The circumstances in which a Fixed Penalty Notice for non-attendance will be issued include:-

Parentally condoned absence  Unauthorised leave  Unwarranted delayed return from authorised leave  Persistent late arrival after the register has closed

- Stage two Penalty Notices can be issued when a student has 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence in a term or 10 days (20 sessions) in two consecutive terms. Parents/ carers may now be issued with up to 3 penalty notices in a year.

Penalty notices can also be issued when students are located in a public place without justification during the first five days of any period of exclusion.

Please see the guidance document on Penalty Notices Annex A.

In extreme cases the school will apply to the Court Officer to initiate legal action.

Procedure for taking further action -

- If a pupil is dual registered, refer the case and evidence to the referring school attendance officer and follow up:-
- For all Blackpool pupils, refer the case to Jeremy Mannino
- For any CLA, please refer to The Virtual Head in your area
- For single registered pupils, please refer direct to the local authority designated attendance team

## **ANNEX A**

### **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS REGARDING PENALTY NOTICES**

#### *Tackling Poor School Attendance*

#### *The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 and the Education Act 1996*

#### *Information for Parents and Carers*

*Introduction - The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue penalty notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others, and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.*

*What is a penalty notice? Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. Depending on the circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days. Full payment of the penalty means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted.*

*What is the cost? Penalty notices are issued at £160 however, if paid within 21 days of being issued the cost is £80.*

*How are they issued? Penalty notices will always be issued by post to your home and are issued to each parent/carer individually in respect of each child.*

*When are they issued? The Council considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that penalty notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs, such as:*

*□□ unauthorised absence □□ truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps);  
□□ parentally condoned absence without good reason; □□ persistent late\*\* arrival at school; □□ unauthorised leave in term time □□ delayed return from authorised leave;*

*In every case a pupil must have had a minimum of 5 school days unauthorised absence in a term or 10 school days unauthorised absence over 2 consecutive terms before a penalty notice is considered. \*\* persistent lateness refers to pupils who arrive after the school register has closed*

*\* The expression "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for him or her, or who has care of the child.*

*\*\* persistent lateness refers to pupils who arrive after the school register has closed*

*Is a warning given? In cases of unauthorised absence and persistent lateness\*\*, you will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Notice being issued. This will tell you the extent of your child's absences and give you 15 school days in which to bring about an improvement. In that time, your child should have no unauthorised absences from school.*

*In cases of unauthorised leave, warnings will be issued where sufficient notice of the intended absence has been given. This means that in some cases, penalty notices may be issued without a warning.*

*Is there an appeal process? There is no statutory right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued. However, on receipt of a warning or penalty notice, you can make representations should you wish.*

*How do I pay? Details of payment arrangements will be included on the penalty notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalment is not an option with penalty notices. No reminders will be sent.*

*Can I be prosecuted if I pay the penalty, but my child is still absent from school? Not for the period stated in the penalty notice, since payment of the penalty discharges your liability for that period. However, it could be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the notice, depending on the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school.*

*What happens if I do not pay? You have up to 28 days from receipt of the notice to pay the penalty in full, after which the Authority is required in most instances to commence proceedings in the local magistrates' court for the original offence of failing to ensure your child attends school regularly. If proven, this can attract a range of sentences including fines up to £2,500 and/or up to three months imprisonment. Other disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences can be imposed depending upon the circumstances. Costs may also be imposed.*

*Can I get help if my child is not attending school regularly? Yes, the local Council and your child's school will give you advice and support if you need help to secure an improvement in your child's attendance. It is very important that you speak with the school or with your local Council at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about securing your child's school attendance.*

**Template 1 – Level Green Attendance**



# Attendance Certificate

Awarded to

-----

*for a weekly attendance of 95% or above*

Signed by .....



## Template 2 – Amber Letter Example

Dear Parent/Carer

This letter is to inform you that your child's attendance has dropped below the acceptable level of 95%.

As you know government guidance states that all pupils must attend school 95% or above and anyone who drops below this level is at risk of underachieving.

We would like to respectfully remind you what this means in term of your child missing out on education:

Attendance	Education Days Missed
95%	19 days (3 weeks 4 days)
80%	38 days (7 weeks 3 days)
70%	57 days (11 weeks 2 days)
60%	76 days (15 weeks 2 days)
50%	95 days (19 weeks)

If you would like to meet with your child's teacher or headteacher to discuss how we can together improve this. Please do not hesitate to contact us –  
01282 851800

The Alternative School





### Template 3 – Red Letter Example

Dear Parent/Carer

This letter is to inform you that your child's attendance has dropped below the acceptable level of 90%

As you know government guidance states that all pupils must attend school 95% or above and anyone who drops below this level is at risk of underachieving.

We would like to remind you what this means in term of your child missing out on education:

Attendance	Education Days Missed
95%	19 days (3 weeks 4 days)
80%	38 days (7 weeks 3 days)
70%	57 days (11 weeks 2 days)
60%	76 days (15 weeks 2 days)
50%	95 days (19 weeks)

Persistent low attendance must be taken seriously and can result in further actions being taken against you, as outlined in our School Attendance Policy.

We would like to invite you to discuss this with your child's teacher or headteacher to discuss how we can together improve this as soon as possible to avoid further action. Please contact us – 01282 851800