



“Inspiring learning, developing character, building futures”

## **Student Support Policies and Procedures**

### **Student attendance policy**

*Aim: To clarify the expectations in terms of student attendance/punctuality and the procedures to report absences*

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# Student attendance policy

## 1. Introduction

Attendance is closely linked to academic success and positive progression. At Blackpool Sixth, we believe that engaging in high-quality learning experiences is key to outstanding outcomes. To prepare students for employment, our expectations in terms of attendance are aligned to expectations in the workplace. Missing just one day a week can result in performing two grades lower across a level 3 programme.

Teachers carefully plan the building of knowledge and skills over time and only those students who are there all the time experience exactly what was intended. Teachers plan assessments carefully in terms of what learning should be secured by the time of the assessment. Only those who are there all the time know what they should know, and have a strong chance of knowing what they don't understand.

Regular attendance is crucial for safeguarding and wellbeing. Frequent absences can indicate underlying issues or safeguarding concerns. We acknowledge that absences may reflect personal challenges inside or outside college.

The college delivers full-time programmes of study designed to be delivered in a classroom situation where students are expected to be physically present. We are not a distance-learning college, and whilst on a temporary basis it is reasonable for subject teachers and support staff to be flexible with attendance due to ill health, prolonged periods of absence cannot be sustainable.

We comply with the Equality Act 2010 by making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, ensuring fair treatment through our "Fitness to Study" policy.

This attendance policy clarifies expectations and standardises procedures for managing absences and monitoring attendance.

## 2. General principles

Every member of staff has a role to play in promoting, monitoring and supporting students to maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality. Our approach to managing attendance is consistent and structured:

- **High expectations** - an unwavering belief that high levels of attendance and punctuality will lead to academic success.
- **Accurate and timely recording** so we can monitor effectively, identify patterns early and respond quickly to any concerns.
- **Monitor and use attendance data effectively** to identify individual students or groups of students who are underperforming and take appropriate action.
- **Professionally curious** - Seek to gain a better understanding of the underlying causes of poor attendance and the challenges students are facing both in and outside college.
- **Support** - Work together with students, staff, and families to address concerns.

### 3. Types of absence

There are 3 types of absence:

- **Authorised** - absence due to an authorised reason as noted in this policy.
- **Known absence** - absence due to a reason not noted as an authorised absence in this policy, but the reason has been reported to college
- **Unknown absence** - absence where no reason has been reported to the college

We report two different attendance figures:

- **Official Attendance:** The percentage of lessons a student is marked as attending, including both those lessons they are present and any authorised absences.
- **Actual Attendance:** The percentage of lessons a student is physically present for, excluding any absences, regardless of whether absences are authorised or not.

#### Authorised absences – if college is notified in advance and appropriate evidence provided

- Serious illness supported by a doctor's note
- Hospital or medical treatments (up to one day)
- Orthodontist appointments (up to half a day)
- University open days (up to one day and a maximum of 3)
- University Interviews and other final career choice interviews.
- Immediate relative's wedding, graduation or funeral (up to one day)
- Practical driving test or driving theory test (up to half a day, but not on the same day as college exams)

Note: Immediate relatives include parents, grandparents, siblings, and in-laws.

#### Unauthorised Absences:

- Sickness that is not supported by a doctor's note
- Holidays during term time
- Routine medical or dental appointments
- Non-study related work
- Birthdays or celebrations
- Driving lessons

Note: The listed examples of authorised and unauthorised absences above are not exhaustive, and other reasons for absence will be considered case by case. For example, for absences related to compassionate leave or other exceptional circumstances, refer to the "Special Leave Policy."

### 4. Absence reporting procedure

At Blackpool Sixth, we expect that parents/carers will use the CEDAR Parent Portal to notify college of all absences before 8.30 am on each day of the absence.

## 5. Maintaining learning during/following student absence

Whatever the reason for absence, it is the student's responsibility to request and complete the work missed as quickly as possible. This is key to minimising the impact of absence on learning and progress.

Staff will support students to do this through various methods. This can include signposting to online resources, additional support or other catch up sessions. This will usually be communicated via email. It is the student's responsibility to request any missing resources and to maintain contact with the college.

It is recognised that during absences due to illness or injury, a student may not be able to engage with learning (a student's health is always the priority), but they must maintain communication with the college during periods of absence.

If students do not take active steps to catch up on missed work, they will fall behind with their studies and may face disciplinary action in line with the positive behaviour policy and disciplinary procedures.

## 6. Intervention strategies

### Tier 1: Universal prevention

- Clear, concise and consistent communication about expectations in terms of high attendance and excellent punctuality
- The impact of low attendance on academic progress and future employment is widely understood
- Recognition of excellent and improved attendance
- Class teachers will follow up with the student to enquire about reasons for absence, provide details of work missed and a reminder of the absence procedures. Any intervention should be recorded on college systems.
- Progress Mentors and other members of the students support team will provide personalised positive communication to students and families when students are absent.
- Progress mentors will monitor attendance of their cohort daily and follow up any unknown absences. Any interventions should be recorded on CEDAR.

### Tier 2: Early intervention

- Progress Mentors will meet with students and set clear and appropriate targets for improvement.
- Parents/carers will be informed of the attendance/punctuality concern.

### Tier 3: Intensive intervention

- If no improvement to attendance/punctuality is seen following early intervention a formal meeting will be arranged in line with the college's positive behaviour policy or fitness to study policy.

### Tier 4: Prolonged absence

- If a student misses a week of lessons without a valid reason, they receive a concern email/letter, with copies sent to parents/carers. This communication may mention possible home visits, Review of College Place meetings, or referrals to social care if no contact is made by a specified date.

- A student may be considered to have left college if they miss four consecutive weeks of classes without reason. Confirmation is sent to the student and their parent(s)/carer(s), and the local authority is notified for students under 18. Reasonable enquiries are made to establish the student's whereabouts and future plans, in coordination with the local authority.
- If welfare concerns arise during prolonged absences, the safeguarding team will act according to the safeguarding and child protection policy.