

# South Shore Academy

## Attendance Policy

### 1. Rationale

**1:1** South Shore Academy, part of the Bright Futures Educational Trust has the highest aspirations for all students and teachers. Our academy works hard to ensure every single student reaches their full potential, making sure no student is left behind. Bright Futures Educational Trust ensures all our schools are a place where teachers love teaching and students love learning – ensuring a world-class education to our students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. For our young people to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and students should be at school, on time, every day the academy is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

### 2. Why Regular Attendance is so important

**2:2 Learning:** - At South Shore Academy we wish to maintain a high level of attendance and punctuality as we believe that these are both unequivocally linked to student progress. The aim this year is for all students to have regular attendance.

**2:3 Safeguarding:** - A young person may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each young person is everyone's responsibility and within the context of South Shore Academy, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for young people encompasses:-  
Attendance

Behaviour Management

Health and Safety Access

to the Curriculum Anti-

bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

### 3. The Law relating to school attendance

**3.1** Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have. This would normally be through regular attendance at school. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

#### 4. Statutory Responsibilities

**4.1** Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for young people of compulsory school age and, where necessary will use legal enforcement.

#### 5. Legal Sanctions

**5.1** When there is absence from the Academy we will do all that we can to ensure every young person and their family is supported to improve attendance and a referral may be made to our Pupil Welfare Officer to offer further support and guidance to young people and parents.

**5.2** Where these interventions fail to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified via our Pupil Welfare Officer and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The Academy will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning young people to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence. A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and / or be imprisoned for a period of, up to three months.

**5:3** Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

##### **5:3(i) Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)**

A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between the Academy and the parent. It can also be extended to include the young person and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance. The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly. The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

##### **5:3(ii) Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)**

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A student is absent from the Academy due to unauthorised leave during term time.
- A student has accumulated at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following a written warning to improve.

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to improve their child's attendance. If attendance improves with no unauthorised absences during the specified period, no further action will be taken at that point. However, if attendance fails to improve, a penalty notice will be issued.

## 6. Understanding types of absence

**6.1** South Shore Academy is required to classify any absence as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. In order to classify absence parents/guardians/carers are always required to give a reason or cause for an absence.

**6.1 (i)** Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the Academy for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

**6.1(ii)** Unauthorised absences are those which the Academy does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping their children off the Academy unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the academy day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Leave of any kind can only be granted in exceptional circumstances (this includes holidays which are now referred to as leave of absence)
- No absences can be authorised retrospectively
- Shopping / Days off for birthdays

**6.2** Students are sometimes reluctant to attend the Academy. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between South Shore Academy, the parents and the student. If a student is reluctant to attend, it is better not to cover up the absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Support systems exist to help with such problems and we would encourage you to contact us straight away.

## 7. Persistent Absence (PA)

**7.1** A young person is deemed as a persistent absentee if they have 90% attendance or less across the school year **for whatever reason**. 90% attendance is an average of 1 day's absence per fortnight. Details of these young people are submitted to the Local Authority and Central Government. Persistent absence is a serious problem for students. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

All our PA students are subject to an Action Plan. All PA students are also automatically made known to the Pupil Welfare Officer at school, who may contact parents to discuss concerns.

## 8. Absence Procedures

### 8.1 Advice for parents if their child is absent:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into the Academy and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

### 8.2 Awareness for parents if their child is absent and actions from South Shore Academy:

- Telephone, text or home visit you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer, Assistant Head of Year or Assistant Vice Principal if absences persist;
- If absences continue to be recorded we may refer the matter to Blackpool Council, Pupil Welfare Service.

## 9. Telephone numbers and contact details

9.1 The academy will endeavour throughout the course of the year to ensure that we always have accurate contact details for all students.

## 10. Lateness

10.1 Parents are expected to ensure that their child is punctual for school. If a young person arrives late, they miss valuable teaching and often feel embarrassed. Poor punctuality can lead to underachievement, poor self esteem, absence and safeguarding issues. Frequent lateness of students can provide grounds for prosecution of parents.

***‘10 minutes every day over 2 weeks equates to 1 hour 40 minutes of missed opportunities of learning.’***

10.2 On arrival at the Academy, students must register immediately at the attendance office in order to obtain their mark.

10.3 The school day starts at 8.50am and we expect students to be in form at that time.

## 11. Leave of Absence

11.1 Amendments to the 2006 regulations, which come into force on 01 September 2013, remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a student can be away from school if the leave is granted. Only **exceptional circumstances** warrant an authorised leave of absence. The Academy will consider each request on an individual basis.

**11.2** Any leave of absence taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Blackpool Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

## **12. Roles and Responsibilities**

**12.1** South Shore Academy believes that improved attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community.

### **12.2 The Governing Body will:**

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents
- Annually review the Academy's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters and attend panel meetings.
- Ensure that the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the Academy's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the Academy has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

### **12.3 The Leadership Team will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
- Form positive relationships with students and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time

- Report the Academy's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

#### **12.4 Form Tutors will:**

- Take the register of the form accurately each morning in the designated place
- Amend the register for students who arrive late to the academy but before 8.50 am.
- Receive absence notes (tutors should date them if parents have not) and forward them to the Attendance Office for cause of absence to be registered, to update the record and maintain accuracy
- Reward students whose attendance is excellent using the appropriate academy systems
- Bring to the attention of the Assistant Head of Year / Head of Year those students whose attendance and punctuality are causes of concern
- Contact parents regarding any students whose punctuality and attendance are causing concern.
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
- Form positive relationships with students and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of the Academy's strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

#### **12.5 The Assistant Head of Year will:**

- Closely monitor progress of low attending, high profile, students.
- Work closely with the Heads of Year and Attendance officer on a daily basis.
- Work with multi-agency teams.
- Liaising, on behalf of the Academy, with students and/or parents/carers.
- Maintain appropriate records.
- Update the Assistant Vice-Principal on any issues that are causing significant concern.
- Attend attendance meetings at least fortnightly to discuss any issues with the Pupil Welfare Officer and the wider Pastoral Team.
- To support the operational requirements as determined by the HOYA/SLT link.

**12.6 The Attendance Officer will:**

- Operate the Academy's Registration system.
- Assist in the maintenance of an up to date and accurate record of attendance (see job description). This will include the regular screening of the accurate completion of registers by class teachers and report any anomalies (by lessons and daily).
- Process requests for absence for holidays.
- Contact home by text, telephone or home visit to ascertain the cause of absence when no notification or explanation has been received. To complete further follow up home visits as required to support increased attendance and safeguarding of identified students.
- Input messages onto the SIMS system
- Contact home when students are late for the morning session
- Issue weekly reports of lesson lates to all staff
- Complete Movement of Children Forms
- To attend as appropriate Attendance Panel Meetings (APMs)
- To request and send appropriate letters for any attendance concerns
- To support the operational requirements as determined by the HOYA/SLT link

**12.7 The Academy will request that Parents:**

- Talk to their child about the Academy and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the Academy if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences.
- Ask the Academy for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the Academy of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the Academy; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with the Academy and acknowledge the importance of young people receiving the same messages from both the Academy and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Not taking leave of absence during term-time.

**12.8 Student's responsibilities:**

- Students should accept responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality and know that it is compulsory to attend school regularly.
- If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending the Academy regularly, they should speak to a member of staff.
- All students must attend registration at the time and in the place indicated to them.
- Students arriving late for the Academy they must go to the attendance office to ensure that their arrival in the Academy has been recorded.

- Students returning to the Academy following an absence should bring a note explaining the reason for the absence **on the day that they return to the Academy**, if the information has not been communicated previously by other means.
- Students who arrive at the Academy after 9.30 am must also bring a note since, after this time, they are classified as absent.
- Students should use their best endeavours to pass on absence notes from parents to their form tutors and to pass school correspondence to their parents.
- Students should all understand that only 'real' illnesses can be a reason for absence.
- Every student should be aware of their current attendance and overall attendance target.
- Every student attending signs a Home – School agreement

### 13. Summary

**13.1** The Academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All Academy staff are committed to working with parents and students as excellent attendance leads to excellent achievement and by attending school regularly this is the best possible way to ensure that every young person's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

**Date of Policy / Review : Sept 2017**