

Highfurlong School

'Inspire, Challenge, Believe'



Pupil Attendance Policy

Current version/Level 4:	Version 5
Completed by:	Alicia Gibbons
Completed on:	12th November 2022 Updated 18th July 2023
Review Date:	18th July 2026
Previous review dates:	15th September 2021 (AGi) 24th May 2020 (LT) Nov 2017 (RS) March 2019 (LT)
Adopted by governors on:	15.11.22



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Responsibility

Those people responsible for attendance matters in school are:

- Teachers
- Office staff
- Pupil and Family Support Workers (PFSW)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Headteacher

Pupil Attendance

As a school dedicated to providing high quality care, education and welfare for young people with medical and physical needs we work very hard to deliver complex support plans for the pupils.

We recognise the importance of regular attendance to:

- Promote pupil's welfare and ensure they are safe
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school

This policy outlines government guidelines and statutory duties that all schools must fulfil regarding the attendance of pupils. Parents also have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Attendance Targets

At Highfurlong we have a whole school attendance target of 95%. We believe this is realistic taking into consideration the complex needs of some of our pupils. For some of our pupils who are experiencing a period of poor health, this target may be deemed to be unreasonable. In this circumstance, in consultation with all parties, the target would be adjusted accordingly.



The Legal Framework

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 and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age on the prescribed day which either falls on or follows a person's fifth birthday. A person ceases to be of compulsory school age on the school leaving date in the academic year in which they turn 16. The school leaving date is currently set as the last Friday in June. Raising the participation age (RPA), as set out in Chapter 1 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, does not affect the compulsory school age. However, its effect is that a person who ceased to be of compulsory school age but has not yet reached the age of 18 (or attained a level 3 qualification), is under a duty to participate in education or training. At Highfurlong our young people attend school until they are 19 and the governors have agreed that the same procedures should apply for all our children and young people.

Under the Education Act 1996, the local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and, where necessary, to use legal enforcement.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. As a school we do not actively reward good attendance but expect it. At Highfurlong School we try to positively engage with parents/carers and have measures in place to support pupils to be in school:

- Helping parents/carers understand the importance of regular attendance and punctuality and supporting parents/carers to help their child with learning
- Ensuring that the school day is always purposeful, fun and offers a wide range of free after school clubs to encourage pupils' to attend school.



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- Offering support for pupils and families through our Pupil and Family Support Worker (PFSW) who tries to alleviate any difficulties experienced at home which may be a barrier for pupils attending school and to help solve any attendance issues as quickly as possible.
- Use of postcards/certificates to reward overcoming barriers or improved attendance
- Giving parents/carers details about attendance expectations in our regular newsletter.
- Notifying parents when their child/young person's attendance or punctuality falls below the acceptable level for our school in our termly attendance reports- see Appendix 1,2,3.
- Ensuring that any child who has vomited or had diarrhoea returns to school 48 hours after their last bout - to prevent the spread of infection.
- At the outbreak of sickness or viruses, commissioning a deep clean of contaminated areas in school.
- Preparing the child for return to school after an extended absence.
- Encouraging parents/carers to make appointments at the beginning or end of a day wherever possible to minimise the amount of time a pupil is absent from school.
- Holding a minimum of three points of contact and telephone numbers on pupil files (which are updated annually) to ensure prompt action can be taken if required.

Attendance Procedures: The School Day

The school day begins at 8:50am.

School registers will close at 9:30am and 1:00pm

Any pupil arriving after 9.30am will be marked as Late (L) in the register. In the afternoon session, which begins at 1.00pm, (L) would be from 1.15pm onwards.

The school day finishes at 3.10pm.

Reporting Absences

- If a child is absent, parents/carers must contact the school office as soon as possible and before 9:00am to report the reason for their child/young person's absence, this can be



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either by phone 01253 392188 or by email: admin@highfurlong.blackpool.sch.uk.

Parents can inform teachers via Seesaw as well but not instead of.

- The PFSW will telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence if school has not heard from them.
- If a child is absent due to a medical/dental appointment then an appointment card or letter must be sent as proof to the school office so it can be authorised.
- Contact with school must be made by parents regularly throughout their child/young person's absence.
- The PFSW and/or PWO may make a call home during the period of absence to seek additional information or clarity if this is required.

Monitoring Absence

1. The PFSW will monitor every child/young person's attendance daily.
2. Initially if there are concerns, the PFSW will telephone or arrange a face-to face meeting (whichever is most convenient) with the parents/carers to discuss attendance concerns and note discussion on the cpom system.
3. If attendance does not improve then a personalised letter will be sent addressing the pupil's individual needs and explaining the possible impact of poor attendance upon their child/young person's needs and progress in school.
4. If this fails to address absences the Local Authority, Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO) intervenes. This may lead to the use of the above legal powers.

SIMS- Attendance Monitoring and Tracking

Teachers use SIMs to enter attendance marks in the morning and afternoon. Teachers mark students as present (/) or N only. It is the responsibility of office staff to ensure that the most appropriate absence codes are added to SIMS.

Staff should also complete a paper copy of the lunch register for the catering manager. If a pupil is



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known to be coming in later (so will need a dinner ordering) staff should do this on a paper copy ONLY and mark an 'N' on SIMS.

Type of Absence

All absences are classified as either authorised or unauthorised:

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
B	Authorised	Educated offsite
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances (must be authorised beforehand by Headteacher)
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to



		illness
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

	circumstances	
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence. This could include a medical absence where no proof has been provided
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed



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Procedure:

If a pupil is absent, then the procedure below should be followed:

1. On the first day of absence parents/carers should phone school to report the absence before 9:00am. Messages should not be passed via Transport Assistance or the SeeSaw app. If there is no message, the PFSW will ring parents/carers for an explanation for the absence. Parents should indicate when it is likely their child will return.
2. If there is no response to a call, both an answer phone message and email/Seesaw message should be sent to the parent/carers asking them to contact school immediately. PFSW will continue to try to make contact throughout the day. If there are any serious concerns for a pupil's welfare such as a pupil who is on a Child Protection Plan, these should be reported before 9.30am to the DSL so a home visit can be arranged that day.
3. A home visit must be arranged for any pupil who has been absent for 10 days and has not been seen by a professional (Doctor, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist or one of the schools' medical team.) Teachers should make a note of all contact during the absence (face-to-face conversations, phone calls, messages in the class diaries, Seesaw messages) by adding onto CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System).
4. The absence will be referred to the Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO) and Children's Social Care if attendance falls below 90% or if we are unable to contact parents and/or have immediate concerns about a child/young person's welfare.
- 5.

Attendance Concerns:

Schools have a statutory responsibility to secure good attendance and to involve appropriate external agencies if poor attendance occurs.

Persistent Absenteeism:

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' if their attendance falls below 90% for whatever reason



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across the school year. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child/young person's educational prospects and schools need parents' full support and cooperation to tackle this. School monitor all absences thoroughly: any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence (PA) mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our safeguarding team and are also automatically made known to the Pupil Welfare Officer.

Absence During Term Time:

On September 1st 2013 new regulations were introduced by the DFE re: absence from school during term time. The regulations make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The regulations make it quite clear that parents/carers do not have the right or an entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a family holiday during term time. Any requests for leave during term time must be made in writing and are at the discretion of the Headteacher. Absence Request Forms are available from the school office.

Legal Sanctions:

Pupils who request holiday in term time may find they are issued with a fine for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason



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If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

See **Appendix 5** for a copy of the legal paperwork issued when issuing a penalty notice.

Exceptional Circumstances:

What amounts to "exceptional circumstances" is at the discretion of the Headteacher and should be judged on a case by case basis but it is unlikely to amount to an exceptional circumstance if it is merely claimed that a holiday abroad can only be afforded in term time or that a parent is unable to take leave during school holidays.

Children Missing From Education

(Refer to [Children Missing From Education, DfE 2016](#) for full details on school responsibilities and duties)

The safeguarding team regularly monitors attendance to ensure there are no children 'Missing from School'.

All children over the age of 5 must be in full time education.

If a child requires a part time timetable for medical reasons, this must be agreed at an EHCP meeting with relevant professionals including the LA and medical professionals. Part time timetables should be reviewed at least half termly and there should be a plan to support the child to attend full time as soon as possible.

The Children Missing Education and Attendance Officer at the local authority will be informed of any child who has been missing from school without a valid reason for 10 days or more or of any child who fails to attend regularly.

Where a child is missing and attempts to contact the family have not been successful, school staff will carry out a home visit on day 1 to inquire as to the child/young person's welfare, the date of a



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return to school and any support the school can offer to the family. If this home visit is unsuccessful then a call to the Safeguarding Support Hub will be made for advice.

Moving out of Area:

When a parent informs the school they are moving, their forwarding address and contact details are noted and the Local Authority SEND Team and Pupil Welfare Service are notified (send@blackpool.gov.uk and pupilwelfareservice@blackpool.gov.uk).

If for any reason there is no information forthcoming, the school Safeguarding Team will inform the Blackpool Pupil Welfare Service on pupilwelfareservice@blackpool.gov.uk or call 01253 476478. If the child is a Lancashire pupil, school will call the CME(Child Missing Education) team on 01257 517333 or email cme@lancashire.gov.uk for advice.

Links with other policies:

This policy links to the following policies:

Behaviour Policy including Exclusions

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy



Appendix 1 Attendance above 96%

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer of **NAME**

Traffic Light System : Termly Attendance Statement Name/Class

Each term we are writing to parents letting them know the attendance percentage that their child has attained using the traffic light system.

	Percentage	Comment
Green	95% and above	Congratulations, your child has attained a strong attendance level. Please keep this up.
Amber	90% to 95%	Your child is below our 95% attendance threshold. We understand this may be due to a couple of days of sickness absence. We hope their attendance picks up.
Red	Below 90%	Your child's attendance is well below the 95% threshold.

Your child's percentage attendance up to and including **DATE** is as follows:

CONGRATULATIONS!
INSERT NAME HERE
Your attendance percentage is %

We hope that every child in the school will work towards an attendance target of 95% and above. Please be aware that we monitor attendance regularly and will make contact with you at any point if we feel that your child's attendance pattern needs to be looked into for any reason.

Yours sincerely

Neill Oldham



Appendix 2 Attendance 90-96%

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer of **NAME**

Traffic Light System : Termly Attendance Statement Name/Class

Each term we are writing to parents letting them know the attendance percentage that their child has attained using the traffic light system.

	Percentage	Comment
Green	95% and above	Congratulations, your child has attained a strong attendance level. Please keep this up.
Amber	90% to 96%	Your child is below our 95% attendance threshold. We understand this may be due to a couple of days of sickness absence. We hope their attendance picks up.
Red	Below 90%	Your child's attendance is well below the 95% threshold.

Your child's percentage attendance up to and including **DATE** is as follows:

INSERT NAME HERE
Your attendance percentage is %

We hope that every child in the school will work towards an attendance target of 95% and above. Please be aware that we monitor attendance regularly and will make contact with you at any point if we feel that your child's attendance pattern needs to be looked into for any reason.

Yours sincerely

Neill Oldham



Appendix 3 Attendance 90-96%

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer of **NAME**

Traffic Light System : Termly Attendance Statement Name/Class

Each term we are writing to parents letting them know the attendance percentage that their child has attained using the traffic light system.

	Percentage	Comment
Green	95% and above	Congratulations, your child has attained a strong attendance level. Please keep this up.
Amber	90% to 95%	Your child is below our 95% attendance threshold. We understand this may be due to a couple of days of sickness absence. We hope their attendance picks up.
Red	Below 90%	Your child's attendance is well below the 95% threshold.

Your child's percentage attendance up to and including **DATE** is as follows:

INSERT NAME HERE
Your attendance percentage is %

Despite any extenuating circumstances or agreed absences, your child's attendance level will now be monitored more closely. You should expect to hear from us in the event of further absence during the course of the coming weeks.

In the event that there is little or no improvement in the coming weeks I may have to invite you in to discuss your child's poor attendance. Following that meeting, and in the absence of satisfactory improvement I will be expected to refer this case to the Pupil Welfare Team at Blackpool Council



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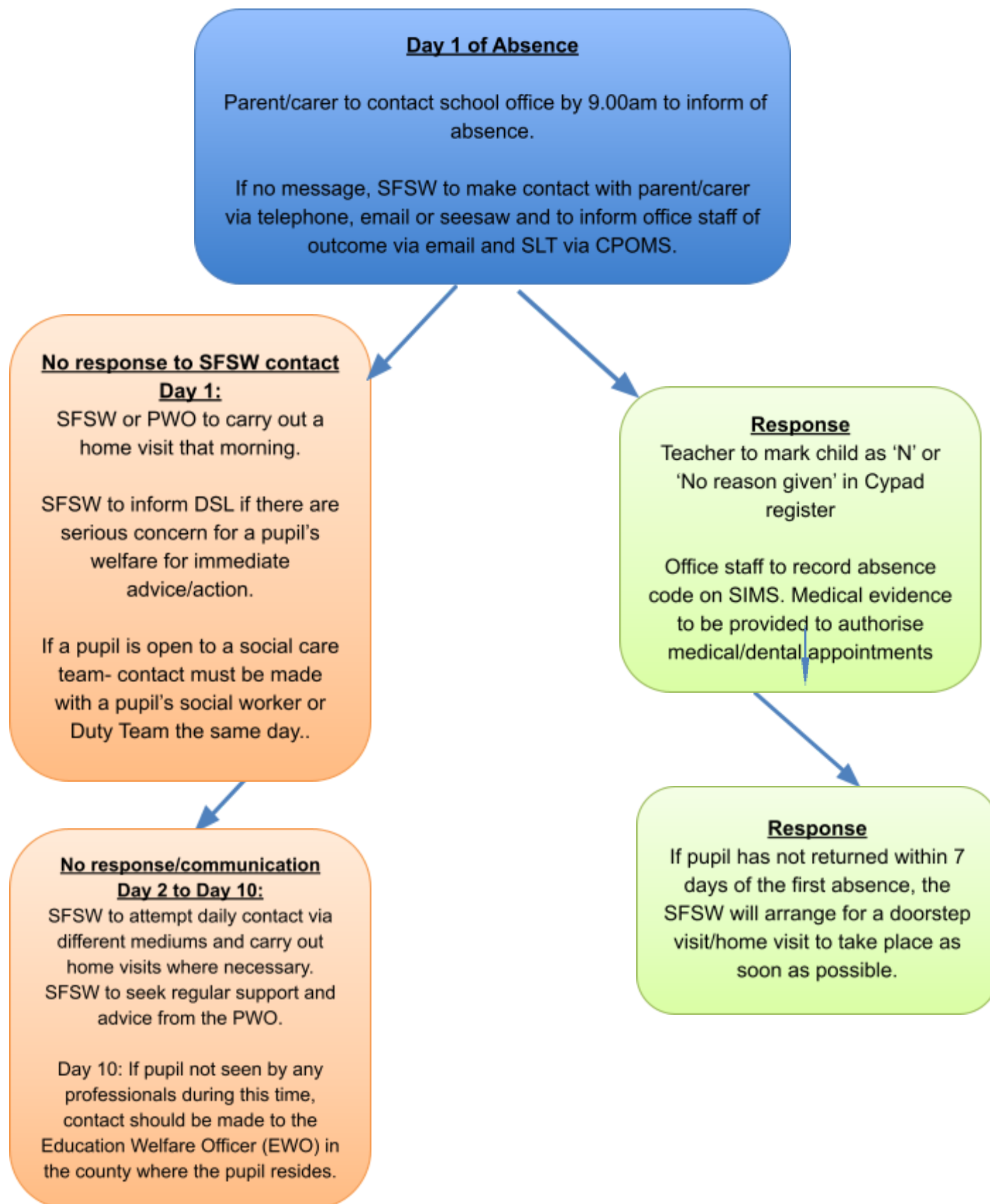


They investigate referred cases and have the power to issue Penalty Notices to parents/carers of pupils with poor school attendance; these penalty payments are set at £60 per parent which, if unpaid, may either increase to £120 or see the parent/carers summoned to appear before Magistrates Court.

Yours sincerely

Neill Oldham

Appendix 4- Absence Flowchart





Appendix 5

REQUEST FOR PENALTY NOTICE

Unauthorised leave

Poor attendance

Information contained in this form may be used in legal action under the Education Act 1996, Section 444, in the event that a Penalty Notice is issued and remains unpaid after the prescribed time limit.

I am writing to request that the Local Authority consider issuing a Penalty Notice to the parent(s)* of the following pupil:

Name of pupil:		DoB:	
Address:		Yr. Group:	

Parent 1 Name:		Parent 2 Name:	
DOB:		DOB:	
Relationship to child:		Relationship to child:	
Address		Address:	



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Penalty notices to be issued to: (please tick appropriate box)

Both parents

Parent 1 only

Parent 2 only

Where details are completed for one parent only or if the request is made to issue for one parent only, please explain the reasons for this:

I can confirm that all our attendance registers are marked in respect of authorised or unauthorised absence in accordance with the guidance issued by the Children's Services Department.

In making this request, I confirm that such action would not conflict with other intervention strategies already in place or other enforcement measures already being processed. I can also confirm that the governing body of this school has reviewed its attendance policy and agreed that this school will request the Children's Services Department to issue Penalty Notices in appropriate cases.

I attach a registration certificate, signed by the Headteacher/Principal, and a declaration regarding the evidence contained therein for use in the issue of a Penalty Notice and, where necessary, in any legal action taken under Education Act 1996, Section 444.

Dated this day of 20 .

Signature

Name (printed)

The Education Act 1996, Section 576, defines a "parent" as all natural parents, any person who has parental responsibility for the child or has care of the child.



PENALTY NOTICE REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

This form is to be completed and signed by the Headteacher or their deputy

Education Act 1996 Section 444

This certificate will be used in legal action under the above Act relating to absence without leave from school in the event that a Penalty Notice is issued and remains unpaid.

I certify that _____, DoB _____, is a registered pupil of compulsory school age, on roll at _____ and that they had _____ unauthorised absences from school on or between _____ and _____ for a reason that meets the criteria defined in Blackpool Council's Procedures for issuing education-related Penalty Notices.

I attach a copy of the school's registration certificate, showing all attendance and absence for this pupil for the period of complaint shown above.

Declaration

I am the Headteacher/ Deputy Head/ Principal/ Deputy Principal of Highfurlong and I hereby certify that the information given in this form and on the attached attendance extract is true to the best of my knowledge. The information has been extracted from the school's register of attendance which can be made available to confirm it is an accurate record.

Dated this _____ day of _____ 20_____

Signature _____ Name (printed)



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Please send this form fully completed along with a copy of the latest registration certificate attached to:

Penalty Notice Team (Education)

Blackpool Council PO Box 4

Town Hall Municipal Buildings

Blackpool FY1 1NA

Alternatively, the form can be scanned and attached to an email along with a copy of the latest registration certificate and sent to:

EducationPN@blackpool.gov.uk