
Queen Elizabeth's School

PUPILS' ATTENDANCE POLICY

(incorporating procedures for the management of Pupils' attendance and punctuality)

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Every pupil at Queen Elizabeth's School has a right to access the education to which they are entitled, and a duty to fully participate in it. By so doing, pupils derive maximum benefit from their education which in turn enables them to reach their full potential. Queen Elizabeth's School recognises the strong link between attainment and attendance, and acknowledges the important role that parents play in helping to ensure optimum rates of punctuality and attendance. The School believes that a coherently formulated and consistently applied Attendance Policy can greatly help to increase levels of attendance and reduce levels of unauthorised and unjustified absence.

The School has particular regard to the Education Act 1996, the Education Act 2002, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations as amended, and all other relevant legislation and guidelines.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Queen Elizabeth's School aims to create a nurturing and stimulating educational environment where the pupils themselves are motivated to attend to the highest levels;
- 2.2 The School aims to maximise the educational attainment and social development of all pupils by promoting the importance of attendance and punctuality;
- 2.3 All staff give attendance matters a high priority, with clear expectations and procedures which are consistently and accurately followed;
- 2.4 The School employs a range of strategies which aim to encourage good attendance and punctuality, including the prompt investigation of all absences;
- 2.5 The School works in partnership with parents and carers, Governors and, where necessary, external multi-agency professionals, to support pupils in achieving optimum attendance at School.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents

- 3.1 Parents are required by law to ensure that their son receives a suitable full-time education and that he attends School regularly;
- 3.2 Parents must ensure that their son arrives at School promptly at the start of each day and in good time for morning registration, unless prevented from doing so by illness, other unavoidable cause or authorised absence;
- 3.3 Parents should ensure that, if their son is absent from School for an unavoidable reason, such as illness, they contact the School by 8.30am on the day of absence;
- 3.4 Parents may not authorise their son's absence and should understand that only the School has the power to do this, on the basis of the explanation provided by a parent. If parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their son's absence, the School will record the absence as unauthorised;
- 3.5 Parents should avoid taking family holidays during term-time.

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The School

- 3.6 The School expects all pupils to maintain at least 95% attendance;
- 3.7 The School will monitor and record attendance in accordance both with statutory requirements and in accordance with the principle that regular, punctual attendance is vital to the pupil's educational progress;
- 3.8 Registers will be taken electronically throughout the day, and will be completed in accordance with standardised Department for Education register codes;
- 3.9 The accurate recording of attendance also serves to safeguard the health and safety of pupils by ensuring their whereabouts are known in the event of a fire drill or emergency;
- 3.10 The School will ensure that any unexplained absences are investigated immediately;
- 3.11 The School will inform parents promptly over concerns about prolonged or frequent pupil absence and give them an opportunity to discuss any difficulties with a member of the School's pastoral team;
- 3.12 The School recognises that vigilance of attendance over a continuous period of time is essential to detect and deal with any negative trends that might arise. In addition to daily monitoring, pastoral leaders receive a weekly attendance and punctuality report for the year to date. Governors receive an annual report on attendance.
- 3.13 The School recognises that frequent or repeated patterns of absence, or poor punctuality, can sometimes be an indicator of abuse and can give cause for a safeguarding concern to be raised. The Safeguarding Team, led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, will act on any such concerns, having taken account of all known circumstances regarding the pupil.

Pupils

- 3.14 Pupils will be punctual when arriving at School in the morning and will attend all registration periods and lessons on time; failure to be punctual not only disrupts the learning of that pupil but also the learning of others;
- 3.15 Pupils will arrive at each lesson properly equipped and ready to learn;
- 3.16 Pupils must follow all School procedures regarding late arrival at, and early departure from, School.

4. TYPES OF ABSENCE

- 4.1 Pupils may be 'present' at School for the purposes of attendance if they are taking part in an approved off-site educational activity; this will be recorded in the attendance register with the appropriate code. Such activities may involve:
 - Educational visits or trips;
 - Supervised sporting activities and fixtures;
 - Musical or dramatic performances organised through the School;
 - Interviews at other schools;
 - Interviews at university;
 - Voluntary service;

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- Work experience

4.2 If none of the above-mentioned activities are being carried out, the pupil is 'absent'. Absence from School can be classified broadly as authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence means that the School has either given its approval in advance for the pupil to be away from School, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Authorised absence

The authorisation of absence will be dealt with according to its type and/ or on its own merits, but broadly the categories of authorised absence may include:

- Illness;
- Medical and dental appointments;
- Music examinations;
- Fixed term exclusion (for less than five days, so that no other educational provision needs to be provided);
- Study leave;
- University Open days;
- Compassionate leave and funerals;
- Religious holidays and festivals;
- Holiday or other 'special days' authorised by the School in exceptional circumstances;
- Leave to take part in a public performance not organised through the School;
- School closure (scheduled closure, or for exceptional circumstances such as snow);
- Exceptional circumstances preventing travel to School.

Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence occurs when the School is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. For example, unauthorised absence may be due to:

- Deliberate absence, for all or part of the day, through truancy (if this is found to be the case, disciplinary procedures will be instigated);
- Holiday not authorised by the School or in excess of the period authorised by the School.

The School will follow up all unexplained absences in a timely manner and in the first instance by contacting the parents by text from 9.30am onwards on the day of absence. If no reason for the absence is given or the explanation is unsatisfactory, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Covid-19 and isolation

4.3 The School recognises that, as part of the measures introduced by the government to control the spread of Covid-19 (coronavirus), pupils may need to isolate at home for the one or more of the following reasons:

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- They are experiencing one or more of the key Covid-19 symptoms (a new persistent cough, a high temperature, loss of or change to their normal sense of smell or taste); in these circumstances they should book a Covid-19 test, through the national testing programme;
- Someone in their household is experiencing one or more of the key Covid-19 symptoms;
- They, or someone in their household, has tested positive for Covid-19;
- They have been identified as a close contact of a person who has tested positive for Covid-19 and been asked to isolate by the School, NHS Test and Trace, or the NHS Covid-19 app.

In these circumstances, pupils should isolate at home (which means not leaving the house for any reason) for a minimum of:

- 10 days from the onset of their own symptoms, or (if asymptomatic) from the date on which they took a test which came back positive; this period should be extended beyond 10 days if they still have a high temperature;
- 14 days from when someone in their household first developed symptoms, or the date they took a test which came back positive (if asymptomatic);
- 14 days from their last close contact with a person who subsequently tested positive, as advised by the School, or national tracing programme. Should this be unknown, 14 days from receiving notification that they had been in close contact with someone who had tested positive.

During a period of isolation, provided they are well, pupils are able to join their lessons using Microsoft Teams, to support the continuity of their education.

Should a pupil or household member receive a negative test result, having experienced symptoms, and no other household members are experiencing any symptoms, then the isolation period can be ended upon receipt of the negative test result.

A negative test result does not allow a pupil to return to School if:

- They have previously tested positive within the preceding 10 days;
- Another member of their household has tested positive in the last 14 days;
- Anyone else in their household is experiencing symptoms of Covid-19;
- They have been asked to isolate due to being identified as a close contact of a person who has tested positive.

In these circumstances the full period of isolation must be completed.

In order to best support pupils and to code absences correctly, the School requests that evidence of all positive and negative test results be sent to absence@qebarnet.co.uk at the earliest opportunity.

If parents are unsure as to what action should be taken, they should contact the School. The School should, in all circumstances, be notified of pupils needing to isolate by their parents and be kept up to date on these matters.

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5. RECORDING ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

- 5.1 The School buildings are open to Sixth Formers from 8am for all pupils from 8.30am. They are dismissed from the School at 3.35pm. Pupils are not supervised outside of these core school hours on the School's site unless they are involved in an organised extra-curricular activity or parents have been notified that their attendance is required;
- 5.2 Pupils must arrive at School by 8.40am in order to ensure that they are in their form rooms ready for morning registration at 8.45am;
- 5.3 Pupils must be in their form rooms (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday) or period 7 lesson (Wednesday and Friday) ready for afternoon registration at 1.50pm. The register is taken five minutes after the start time for afternoon registration.
- 5.4 If a pupil arrives late to his form room after the register has already been taken, the teacher will record his arrival in the register as late;
- 5.5 If a pupil misses the morning registration session completely, he must sign in in an agreed central location in the School's Main Building, stating the reason for his lateness;
- 5.6 At 9:30am, parents will be sent a text to confirm their son's absence and ascertain a reason if no notification has been provided. Parents can reply to this text message directly or they can email absence@qebarnet.co.uk or leave a voicemail on Option 1 of the School's main system;
- 5.7 Where pupils are attending an assembly in the afternoon, teachers will usually take the register in their form room before gathering in the assembly hall;
- 5.8 Subject teachers are required to record attendance and punctuality at the start of each lesson, using the SIMS registration app, and this information is centrally monitored throughout the day to quickly identify any pupil that should go missing;
- 5.9 Sixth Formers who have free periods in the afternoons may leave the School premises temporarily or leave for the day, but must nevertheless be present at School for both morning and afternoon registration (other than Wednesdays and Fridays, when they may leave from 11.30am onwards if they have no more lessons or School activities for the remainder of the day);
- 5.10 Boys who have attended one or both periods of daily registration but who are leaving School early must sign out in the agreed central location, stating the reason for their early departure, which must have been authorised in advance.

6. RECEIVING AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Daily absence reporting

- 6.1 If a pupil is unexpectedly unable to attend School, for example through illness, his parent should email the School at absence@qebarnet.co.uk or telephone the main School number, choosing Option 1 (the Pupil Absence Notification voicemail), by 8.30am on each day of absence;
- 6.2 The parent's message should include the boy's name, his Form and the reason for his absence;
- 6.3 Parents of pupils who are reporting their son's absence in the days prior to or after any school holiday will be required to provide medical evidence to authorise their son's absence (as proof they are not on holiday).

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Requests for future dated absence

The School discourages any planned term time absence because of the deleterious effect it can have on a child's education. Excessive amounts of authorised absence can be as damaging to the continuity of learning as unauthorised absence; therefore it is only authorised sparingly and after careful consideration. Discretionary authorised absence may be granted in a limited range of circumstances, described in 4.2 above. In order to request a future dated absence:

- 6.4 A formal request must be sent to absence@qebarnet.co.uk. If the School feels that it needs to see further supporting evidence, such as a hospital letter or proof of a performance taking place, the parent will subsequently be asked to provide it;
- 6.5 Parents must give reasonable notice of their request; this will depend on the circumstances, but this will consist of at least several days;
- 6.6 Only the School may authorise such absences, and no authorisations will be made retrospectively;
- 6.7 Parents will be informed by the School via email (from a member of the Senior Leadership Team or their son's Head of Year) as to whether their request for future absence has been authorised or not;
- 6.8 The relevant entry will then be made on the attendance register in advance;
- 6.9 Factors taken into account when deciding to grant future authorised absence:
 - a. Parents cannot demand leave of absence in term time as a right. When considering whether to authorise individual requests for authorised absence, the School will consider:
 - The nature of the event e.g. how significant or exceptional it is;
 - Whether and how much advance notice was given;
 - The frequency of similar previous requests;
 - The overall attendance record of the pupil concerned;
 - The pupil's stage of education and progress;
 - The time of year e.g. proximity to a test or exam period
 - b. Parents should try, where possible, to arrange non-emergency and routine medical, dental and orthodontic appointments outside of School hours;
 - c. There is an expectation that absences due to appointments will entail the pupil missing only a small part of the School day, or as little as possible. Pupils in Years 7-10 must be collected from the School, by a parent or other nominated adult, and brought back after the appointment;
 - d. Parents are urged in the strongest terms to avoid booking family holidays in term-time as authorised absence will only be granted for this purpose in exceptional circumstances. If permission is granted but parents keep their son away from School for longer than was agreed, the extra days will be treated as unauthorised absence;
 - e. Requests for absence for the purposes of religious observance will be authorised, provided the day in question is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Other than in exceptional circumstances, absence around a period of religious observance should be limited to one day.

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7. DEALING WITH CONCERNS ABOUT ATTENDANCE

- 7.1 Any problems with regular attendance and punctuality are best sorted out at an early stage between the School, the parents and the pupil; lines of communication between School and parents must therefore be kept as open as possible;
- 7.2 Parents should contact their son's Head of Year if they feel their son is showing a reluctance to attend School. The sooner the School is aware of any issues and can intervene, the sooner the problem may be solved;
- 7.3 The School will alert parents if they feel that issues of reluctance to attend School or particular lessons have arisen;
- 7.4 The School reserves the right to invite parents into School to discuss any attendance issues which raise safeguarding concerns.

Persistent absence

- 7.5 If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, his attendance in particular will be monitored. Often his attendance rate will have been caused by an acceptable reason, such as bouts of illness, but if the reason(s) given for his absence, over time, appear unacceptable or a pattern of absence has formed, further information will need to be gained from parents or health professionals;
- 7.6 If attendance falls below 90%, parents will be contacted by the Head of Year to discuss how attendance can be improved.

Long-term absence

- 7.7 The Headmaster has overall responsibility for pupils who cannot attend School for medical reasons; however, contact with parents and the monitoring of School work rest with the Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Year;
- 7.8 The Head of Year, in consultation with the Headmaster, parents and, if necessary, other professionals, will assess the pupil's capabilities, schemes of work and educational progress;
- 7.9 The Head of Year, in consultation with individual tutors, will make arrangements for work and materials to be organised for the pupil and a time at which they will be returned will be agreed;
- 7.10 The Head of Year will liaise with the Examinations Officer over any special arrangements that need to be made regarding public examinations;
- 7.11 Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time will be re-integrated back into School through a structured and individually tailored programme to ease their transition.

Measures parents can take to improve attendance

- 7.12 Parents should only allow their son to stay at home if he is genuinely ill; parents will know best, but should encourage their son to come to School if he is feeling slightly unwell or has very minor aches and pains. These are often forgotten once at School, and the School will contact parents if it becomes necessary;
- 7.13 Parents should be familiar with the routines of the School day;

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- 7.14 Boys should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own punctuality, but parents can help towards this end by ensuring that their son has a realistic bedtime, a reliable alarm clock and have prepared what they need for School the night before;
- 7.15 Parents should be particularly watchful and supportive in the run up to examinations and tests, and be aware of coursework deadlines;
- 7.16 Parents should speak to the School immediately if there are any concerns about attendance;
- 7.17 They should discuss any problems surrounding attendance with their son, as uncovering the reason for non-attendance or a lack of punctuality is a crucial part in resolving any problems;
- 7.18 Parents should avoid taking family holidays in term-time and try to arrange all non-urgent medical and dental appointments outside of School hours;
- 7.19 Parents are able to monitor their son's daily and cumulative attendance at any time via eQE.

8. SANCTIONS AND REWARDS

Sanctions for lateness

- 8.1 If a pupil is marked 'Late' at either a morning or afternoon registration session three times he will receive a formal sanction from his Form Tutor;
- 8.2 Once a pupil has been 'Late' more than three times, the issue of his punctuality will be referred to his Head of Year.

Other issues concerning punctuality and attendance

- 8.3 Any issues concerning internal truancy will be dealt with as a disciplinary issue and sanctioned accordingly under the School's discipline procedures;
- 8.4 Universities and employers look for candidates who can demonstrate high levels of commitment, self-discipline and organisation. Therefore, when writing UCAS testimonials and references, the School will refer to any problems concerning the candidate's record of attendance or punctuality.

Rewards for good attendance

- 8.5 The School recognises that high rates of attendance and punctuality are beneficial to a pupil's educational progress and the development of his organisational skills and self-discipline;
- 8.6 The School gives praise to those individual pupils whose attendance is 100% each term; the Year Head sends an email to parents congratulating their son on his excellent attendance record.

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*LINKED
POLICIES*

- Governors' Statement of Education*
- Assessment for Learning Policy*
- Educational Visits Policy*
- Equal Opportunities Policy*
- Home-School Agreement*
- Pupil Discipline Policy*
- Safeguarding Policy*
- SEND Policy*

*LINKED
LEGISLATION
AND
REFERENCE
MATERIALS*

- The Education Act 1996, especially ss 7, 443 and 444
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Skills Act 2008 s.155
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, as amended, 2006 - 2013
- School attendance: guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, DfE, 2020
- Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year, DfE, 2020

Approved by the Governing Body on 5 November 2020

Signed

B.R. Martin, Chairman of the Governing Body