

Attendance Policy

Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith



Approved by Governors' E&S Committee: 18.06.2020

Chair of Governors: T Boving Foster
Date: 18.06.2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'T Boving Foster'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Headteacher: P Buckland

Date: 18.06.2020



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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Queen Elizabeth Grammar School is committed to providing an environment in which all pupils are given the opportunity to achieve their potential in academic and personal development. There is a clear link between high attendance, high attainment and social and mental well-being. Our whole school community shares responsibility for promoting high levels of attendance through clear guidelines, encouragement and support.

Our whole school attendance target is a minimum of 97%.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school in time for registration on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 0850 and will be kept open until 0900. The register for the second session will be taken at 1420 and will be kept open until 1430.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence and every subsequent day the child is absent – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 0930 or as soon as practically possible on each day of illness (see also section 6).

Parents can contact school by telephone: 01768 864621, via ParentMail or by email absence@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk.

Parents/guardians will be contacted via telephone if the school has not received notification of the pupil's absence.

If a pupil is absent for four consecutive days a member of school staff will contact parents/guardians to ask if they need any support.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. A copy of the appointment card or letter or a screenshot of an appointment made online should be shown at reception for our records. Parents can contact school by telephone: 01768 864621, via ParentMail or by email absence@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to attend registration and lessons on time. Parents are responsible for ensuring pupils arrive on time each school day. Pupils are also expected to take responsibility by ensuring they make every effort to arrive on time each day.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code and must sign in at reception.

Pupils must attend registration twice a day, this is an important time for pupils to receive information and support from their form tutor. If registration is missed but a pupil has signed in using InVentry they will be marked late.

Punctuality is monitored each week by the Attendance and Support Officer. If a pupil is late twice in a week they will be spoken to by their form tutor to highlight any areas where support may be needed, a record of this conversation will be emailed to the Attendance and Support Officer. If a pupil is late three times in a two week period, they will have to attend a HoY detention. If a pupil is late a further two times in the same half term then parents will receive an email from the Attendance and Support Officer and if there is no subsequent improvement, parents/guardians will be invited into school for a meeting and an attendance and punctuality plan will be agreed.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

The Attendance and Support Officer will identify unexplained absences each morning and will telephone home on the first day of absence to alert parents and seek explanations. She will also identify pupils who arrive late into school or who do not attend afternoon registration. The appropriate member of SLT will be notified of any unusual events or concerns.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Pupil's attendance figures will be included in each review and report throughout the year.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Granting leave for 'exceptional circumstances' is at the Headteacher's discretion, some examples where leave of absence may be granted are as follows:

- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Holidays requested due to a disability or illness in the family
- Other authorised circumstances, e.g. serious family illness or bereavement

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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

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

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We are committed to promoting good attendance in school through wall displays, assemblies and award certificates each term. Parents are also emailed to notify them if their child achieves 100% attendance over a term. We strive to communicate early about attendance trends, acknowledge positive improvements and to work with families avoid pupils becoming persistent absentees.

6. Attendance monitoring

Parents are expected to contact the school in the morning by 0930 if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2) and each subsequent day.

On the fourth consecutive day of absence, we will contact the parents to discuss if any support is required. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

The Attendance and Support Officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis. If a pupil's attendance falls below 97% the form tutor will talk to the pupil to identify any concerns and a record of this conversation will be emailed to the Attendance and Support Officer so that clear records can be kept. If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, the Attendance and Support Officer will contact parents/guardians to discuss if any support is needed. If a pupil's attendance falls below 93% parents will receive an email offering support and informing them that their child's attendance will be monitored closely for the next six weeks, if there is no improvement then parents/guardians will receive a letter inviting them into school to discuss how we can best support raising attendance and an attendance action plan may be agreed.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The Attendance and Support Officer analyses attendance data on an individual level and by certain groups or trends, to monitor and evaluate those children who may be in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The Attendance and Support Officer

The Attendance and Support officer:

- Monitors attendance data on whole school, year group, groups of learners and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Assistant Headteacher for Student Welfare or the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Writes and monitors attendance support plans and runs team around the family meetings to ensure improvement and support
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

7.4 Class teachers/form tutors

Form tutors and teachers are responsible for accurately recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on SIMS or to the Attendance and Support Officer promptly.

Form tutors will address issues regarding punctuality and pass concerns regarding attendance to the Head of Year and the Attendance and Support Officer. Teachers are expected to notify office staff if a pupil who has earlier in the day been registered as present is now missing from their lesson.

7.5 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They will also check appointment cards, letters etc. and make a copy for our records.

Office/reception staff will act upon notifications from teachers informing them of pupils missing from lessons.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Attendance and Support Officer and Assistant Headteacher, Student Welfare. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy should be read with reference to and is linked with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- SEND Policy and Information Report
- Child Looked After
- Supporting Students with Medical Needs
- Bereavement

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by 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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
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
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
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 reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
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 circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
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 halfterm/bank holiday/INSET day