



Attendance Policy

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

Queen Elizabeth Grammar School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all of our students. Regular attendance is critical if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. Queen Elizabeth Grammar School actively promotes 100% attendance for all our students and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role, and a legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance and we promise to identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents/carers, students and other agencies to resolve attendance problems.

Attendance and punctuality are recorded electronically and an automatic service is used to keep the school and parents informed. Parents will be notified by telephone call from the Attendance Officer if a student is absent and the school has not been notified; see parental responsibility below.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school and arrive on time. Good attendance is essential to the all-round development of children and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. We expect pupils to attend school every day that it is open. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts students at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is a parent's responsibility to contact the school via ParentMail every day their child is absent by 9.30. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Students are expected to arrive by 8.50 am. All students that arrive late must immediately go to school reception where the reason for lateness will be recorded.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL STAFF

At Queen Elizabeth Grammar School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Assistant Head (Pastoral) has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

Teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The form tutor notifies the relevant Head of Year of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Year for each year group to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness within their year group is at a minimum
- Monitoring of poor attendance and lateness, which includes parent meetings and the completion of Early Help Notification referrals.
- An up to date action plan is in place to target poor attendance.

TIMELINE OF SCHOOL ACTION FOR POOR ATTENDANCE

- 95 - 100% attendance – Form Tutor and Head of Year (HOY) to monitor. Letter sent by Attendance Officer.
- 90 - 95% attendance – Head of Year (HOY) to monitor. Support to be offered through attendance meetings with the Attendance Officer, school intervention letters/School Attendance Meeting with parents. Letter sent.
- Below 90% - Head of Year and SLT to monitor. School may consider making a referral to the CCC Inclusion and Attendance Officer where the absences have not been authorised and referral criteria are met. Letters sent.

Please refer to *Appendix 1* for guidance on what work should be undertaken by the school prior to referral.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER/FORM TUTOR:

Registers should be completed at the beginning of each morning by the Form Tutor and then in the afternoon at the start of lesson 4 by the class teacher. Absences must be identified and recorded by the Attendance Officer.

Frequent absence is also a cause for concern. *If a form tutor/subject teacher notices a pattern of absence or suspects a student is, or has truanted from school they MUST notify the Head of Year and attendance officer by e-mail immediately.*

Students are expected to arrive at school on time, they must be in their form room by 8.50am.

Students will be marked late if they are not in the room when the register is taken. If they arrive after 8.50 am they will be recorded late at school reception on their arrival.

Students arriving after 9.10 am must sign in at reception and will automatically be recorded as late. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, arrivals after 9:20am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence which may result in an attendance meeting and school attendance monitoring if parents are unable to notify school of a legitimate reason for the lack of punctuality.

It is the responsibility of The Attendance Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on each day of absence.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance codes are entered into the registers
- Parents are kept regularly informed of the child's attendance figure

THE ROLE OF THE ATTENDANCE OFFICER:

The Attendance Officer will maintain and analyse all attendance and punctuality data, ensuring all data is accurate and up to date. The Attendance Officer will liaise with Teachers, Tutors, Heads of Year (HOY) and Senior Leadership (SLT) regarding attendance and punctuality, producing any reports

required and making referrals to agencies as necessary. The Attendance Officer will send out letters in accordance with Appendix 1.

The Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers of absent students where no contact has been made to advise them of their absence. The Officer will liaise with the Head of Year about these students. In order to ensure we are safeguarding pupils, we will endeavour to hold two emergency contacts for students, wherever possible.

The Attendance Officer will keep the Assistant Head (Pastoral), Deputy Headteacher, Headteacher and Head of Year informed of any special circumstances regarding attendance.

The Attendance Officer will monitor unauthorised absences and send notification of further action letters to parent/carers as required.

The Attendance Officer will meet with the HOY and Assistant Head teacher separately in a fortnightly meeting to discuss their year group attendance.

The Attendance Officer will produce and send relevant attendance reports to Heads of Year to enable them to monitor attendance for their year group and to intervene where attendance causes concern. Reports will be sent on both a daily basis to the Headteacher and as requested by the Leadership Team.

The Attendance Officer will:

- Monitor attendance of students with attendance below 95%
- Follow up phone calls and support when additional meetings take place
- Implementation of interventions to raise attendance of students identified as Persistent Absentees (below 90% attendance)
- If a pupil is absent for 4 consecutive days, the attendance officer will call home and offer support

THE ROLE OF THE HEAD OF YEAR:

The Head of Year will monitor students whose parents have not contacted the school on the first day of a student's absence and, if established, advise the Attendance Officer of reason for absence. If a student is suspected of truanting, the Head of Year will liaise with the Attendance Officer to keep the parents informed.

The Head of Year will keep the Attendance Officer informed of any special circumstances regarding student attendance.

Should a Student's attendance fall below 95%, the Head of Year will inform the Attendance Officer to send an attendance letter indicating that a student's attendance is being monitored. When medical evidence is requested, this should be in the form of an appointment card, a copy of a prescription, prescription medication packaging or a photograph of the medication label indicating the student's name and the date it was prescribed, a copy of an appointment letter detailing the time and date of the appointment. A letter from the Doctor is not requested as this may have a cost attached.

HOY are responsible for liaison with Attendance Officer and making any referrals for additional support in conjunction with AHT.

THE ROLE OF THE SUBJECT TEACHER:

Registers should be taken within the first 10 minutes of the lesson. Any student arriving late to the lesson should be recorded as 'late' and appropriately reprimanded for their poor punctuality.

Subject teachers should follow up any students that are registered as being in school but not present in the lesson by sending an e-mail to the Attendance Officer and reception immediately.

Subject teachers should note patterns in poor attendance and punctuality and refer these to the Head of Year.

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below: -

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances: -

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

LATENESS

At Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, the register is taken at 8.50am and 12.05pm. Latecomers will be recorded as late. Any students arriving after 8.50am must report to the school office where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The student will be marked as late until registration has closed (Code 'L').

The registers will close at 9.20am and 12.25pm. Students arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents at consultation evenings and/or parents may be invited to a School Attendance Meeting. Such lateness may result in a meeting to discuss ways to support the morning routine.

The Head of Year will monitor students who are repeatedly late. If a student is suspected of truanting, the Head of Year will liaise with the Attendance Officer to keep the parents informed.

AUTHORISING ABSENCE

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence. Where there is doubt, the Head Teacher, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in “exceptional circumstances”. The following reasons are examples of absence that will not normally be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments in the school day unless these are deemed unavoidable
- Child’s/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child’s Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings need to be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACTION MAY INCLUDE:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

ATTENDANCE LETTERS

Appendix 1	Unexplained Absence Letter
Appendix 2	Punctuality Letter
Appendix 3	Under 96% Attendance Letter
Appendix 4	Under 95% Request for Medical Evidence Letter
Appendix 5	Invitation to an Attendance Improvement Meeting Letter
Appendix 6	Failure to Attend Meeting Letter
Appendix 7	Referral to School Liaison Officer Letter
Appendix 8	Application Form for Leave Of Absence
Appendix 9	Authorisation for Leave
Appendix 10	Authorisation for Special Event
Appendix 11	Leave Unauthorised
Appendix 12	Leave cited as other absence
Appendix 13	Leave not requested in advance

APPENDIX 1 UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE LETTER

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»,

I am writing to you as I have concerns over «chosen_forename»'s absences on the following dates:

«periods_of_absence»

I tried to make contact on the above date(s), unfortunately I have not received any information from you as of yet. Please could I ask you to contact me as soon as possible to let me know why your child was absent from school in order to have «chosen_forename»'s records updated. «He__She» currently has «total_unexplained_sessions» unexplained absences this academic year, this includes both morning and afternoon sessions.

Please be aware of the significant impact that absence from school has on the progress and development of a child and as such the school needs to ensure that the correct support is in place for your child.

Please could you respond with a reason for each date provided above either by completing the slip below for your child to return to their Form Tutor, or by emailing me at attendance@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk or call 01768 864621 to leave me a message. I will then update their attendance records but please be advised that it's the School's decision whether the absence will be authorised.

Many thanks in advance,

Attendance Officer

Please return to The Form Tutor

The reason for «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»'s absence on:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Signed: _____ Parent/Guardian Date: _____

APPENDIX 2 PUNCTUALITY LETTER

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»,

Re: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»'s punctuality to school

I write in order to draw your attention to your child's punctuality record for this academic year. Our records show that «chosen_forename» has been late to school on «total_lates_both» occasions which is a cause for concern. Five or more incidents of late arrival to school in any one academic year causes us significant concern.

Your daughter/son should arrive in school by 8:50 am. Good punctuality is an essential part of preparing them for the demands of future life outside of school such as university and employment.

We always refer to student attendance and punctuality records when replying to applications for further education and employment references, therefore good attendance and punctuality is essential. These records can play an effective part in this process reflecting a student is reliable and committed.

If there is a reason that your child cannot arrive in school on time, please do not hesitate to contact me so that we can work together to overcome the issue.

I hope to see an improvement in «chosen_forename»'s punctuality for the remainder of this year and for the rest of «his_her» school career.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

APPENDIX 3 UNDER 96% ATTENDANCE LETTER

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Attendance – «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» - «reg»

I am writing to you as «chosen_forename»'s attendance this year has been recorded at «percentage_attendance»%.

The government expectation for good attendance at school is at least 96% and any student with less than this is missing over 2 whole weeks of learning over the course of the academic year. At Queen Elizabeth Grammar School we are committed to improving achievement and monitor the attendance of all of our pupils. The greater the attendance, the greater the achievement!

Any pupil whose attendance falls below 96% is monitored daily and I'm sure you will agree that your child must attend school regularly to ensure that the maximum benefit is obtained from the education provided. I hope that we can work together to see your child's attendance improve and move above the target laid out for good attendance. If there are on-going concerns then please do contact me to discuss what further support might be needed.

Please contact me via email at attendance@qegs.cumbria.sch.uk or call 01768 864621 or send me a Parent Mail to discuss any problems there may be that affect your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

APPENDIX 4 UNDER 95% REQUEST FOR MEDICAL EVIDENCE LETTER

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Attendance – «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» - «reg»

Despite our previous correspondence, «chosen_forename»'s attendance has continued to fall. At present «his_her» percentage currently stands at «percentage_attendance»% and this will have an impact on her/his education.

So far this academic year they have had «total_of_specified_codes» sessions away from school due to illness or for medical appointments (each school day is made up of two sessions). Further absences due to illness will need to be supported by some form of medical evidence. This can include appointment cards, test results, prescriptions, hospital letters or even dated prescription labels. Without this evidence any further time off for illness will be recorded as unauthorised.

The 1996 Education Act clearly states “If any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, the parents/carers of the child shall be guilty of an offence”. We recognise that there are sometimes wider concerns and would ask that you work with us to address these in order to improve his/her attendance. We recognise that this can be a complicated and challenging process and so would encourage you to arrange a time to come and discuss the issues and what we can do to support.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via email attendance@gegs.cumbria.sch.uk or call 01768 864621 to discuss any concerns you may have about your child's health that I may not be aware of. I hope that we can work together to help «chosen_forename» to feel supported in school.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

APPENDIX 5 INVITATION TO AN ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT MEETING LETTER

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Attendance – «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» - «reg»

Despite our previous correspondence, «chosen_forename»'s attendance has continued to fall. At present «his_her» percentage currently stands at «percentage_attendance»% and this will have an impact on your child's education.

The 1996 Education Act clearly states "If any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, the parents/carers of the child shall be guilty of an offence". Failure to ensure that your daughter attends school can result in more formal process and referral to the local authority.

Please would you attend an Attendance Improvement Meeting here at school at the following time:-

Date/Time

It is important that you and «chosen_forename» both attend so we can discuss the issues around their attendance and work together to make an improvement. If this is not convenient please contact your me at your earliest convenience to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet to discuss our next steps. If you fail to attend a meeting and «chosen_forename»'s absence continues to deteriorate a referral will be made to the Local Authority for intervention by the Attendance Officer.

I look forward to meeting you and hope that we can help «chosen_forename» to feel supported and that they can attend school.

Yours sincerely

Head of Year

APPENDIX 6 FAILURE TO ATTEND MEETING LETTER

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

«chosen_forename» «chosen_surname», «reg» - «date_of_birth»

We recently invited you in to attend a meeting with the Head and you failed to arrive.

Following on from discussions with members of staff about «chosen_forename»'s low attendance, it is with regret that I have to inform you that the decision has been made by the school to refer to the Attendance Officer working for the Local Authority for further action.

As of today «chosen_forename»'s attendance stands at «percentage_attendance»% for this academic year which falls below acceptable government regulations.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 7 REFERRAL TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER LETTER

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

«chosen_forename» «chosen_surname», «reg» - «date_of_birth»

Following on from discussions with members of staff about «chosen_forename»'s low attendance, it is with regret that I have to inform you that the decision has been made by the school to refer to the Attendance Officer working for the Local Authority for further action.

As of today «chosen_forename»'s attendance stands at «percentage_attendance»% for this academic year which falls below acceptable government regulations.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 8 APPLICATION FORM FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

It is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 as to whether leave of absence is authorised. The regulations make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances relating to that application. Each case will be judged on an individual basis as outlined in guidance from the Department for Education.

Taking your child out of school during term time is detrimental to your child's learning, progress and overall achievement.

If the leave of absence is not authorised and it is taken anyway, the case will be referred to Cumbria County Council who may issue a Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty instead of being prosecuted for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of receipt of the Notice it will be £60 per parent, per child. If you pay the penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence i.e. your liability for the offence will be discharged.

Name of Child	
Date of Birth	
Form Group	
Date of First Day of Absence	
Date of Return	
Number of Days requested	

Reason for leave of absence to be taken during term time and details of the "exceptional circumstances" related to this application.

Signed _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian

Print name _____

APPENDIX 9 AUTHORISATION FOR LEAVE

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Leave of Absence Request – enter dates

«chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» - «reg»

Thank you for completing the leave of absence request form, on this occasion I believe there to be exceptional circumstances and have authorised your request.

The length of authorised leave is stated above, should you exceed this period a Penalty Notice may be requested.

It is widely recognised that regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and is essential if children are to maximise their educational opportunities and make the progress expected. Queen Elizabeth Grammar School' Learning Agreement clearly outlines our expectation that you do not take your child out of school during term time.

The school's target for attendance is 97% which is just above the minimum national standard. It is recognised that attendance below this starts to impact upon children's learning, their progress and overall achievement

Please ensure that «chosen_forename» has seen all of «his_her» teachers prior to this period of leave to obtain work that can be completed whilst away and that upon «his_her» return all missed work is completed to the required standard and returned to staff within two weeks.

In future can you please make sure that your child's attendance remains above the government target of 96% and that any requests for leave of absence are avoided. It is highly unlikely that any further requests for leave during term time will be authorised in the future.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 10 AUTHORISATION FOR SPECIAL EVENT

«addressee»
«address_block»
«date_of_printing»
Dear «salutation»

Absence for Special Circumstances – enter event here

«chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» - «reg»

Thank you for your recent letter requesting that «chosen_forename» is granted leave from school to participate in the above event. This is an exciting opportunity for «him_her», and therefore I will authorise the absence from school on the date stated above.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate «chosen_forename» on being selected to participate in this event and I wish «him_her» an enjoyable experience.

Can you please make sure that «he_she» has seen all «his_her» teachers in advance of this absence and completes any work that is missed.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 11 LEAVE UNAUTHORISED

«addressee»
«address_block»
«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Request for leave during Term-Time - «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname», «reg»

Dates of Application: enter dates

I have received your request to take «chosen_forename» out of school for the period of time stated above. I have considered your request but I am writing to inform you that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised.

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the “Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 1996” removing the Head Teacher’s ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the regulations only allow me to authorise absences from school in “exceptional circumstances”.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 12 LEAVE CITED AS OTHER ABSENCE

«addressee»
«address_block»
«date_of_printing»
Dear «salutation»

Re: «chosen_forename»«chosen_surname», «reg»

Dates of Absence: enter dates

We believe that «chosen_forename» has been taken on holiday during term time between the dates stated above. The reason that we are led to believe this is [enter reason here](#)

This leave was not requested in advance and has not been authorised. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a penalty notice being issued for each parent/carer with parental responsibility for «chosen_forename» unless you are able to provide us with evidence that this was not the case within 10 days.

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the “Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 1996” removing the Head Teacher’s ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the regulations only allow me to authorise absences from school in “exceptional circumstances”.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 13 LEAVE NOT REQUESTED IN ADVANCE

«addressee»
«address_block»
«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re: «chosen_forename»«chosen_surname», «reg»

Dates of Absence: enter dates

You have informed the school that you have taken «chosen_forename» out of school during term time for a holiday, this leave was not requested in advance. I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and therefore this absence will be recorded as unauthorised

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the “Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 1996” removing the Head Teacher’s ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the regulations only allow me to authorise absences from school in “exceptional circumstances”.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher