



QUEEN ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL

# ATTENDANCE POLICY 2022

Title of Policy	Attendance Policy 2022
Policy Type	School
Review Cycle	Annual
Policy Prepared by	Mr Mark Willis, Assistant Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead
Committee Responsible	The Academy Committee
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## **Section 1: Rationale/statement of intent**

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. Queen Elizabeth's School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work.

High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Department of Education research found that the higher the overall absence rate across Key Stage (KS) 2 and KS4, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS2 and KS4.

Pupils with no absence are 1.3 times more likely to achieve level 4 or above, and 3.1 times more likely to achieve level 5 or above, than pupils that missed 10-15% of all sessions

Pupils with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs 9-4 or equivalent including English and mathematics than pupils that missed 15-20% of KS4 lessons

Regular attenders:

- make better progress, both socially and academically
- find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- find learning more satisfying
- are more successful in transferring between first school, Middle school, Upper school, and higher education, employment or training.

## **Section 2: Operating the policy**

### **1. Promoting good attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

Queen Elizabeth's School will provide parents with regular information regarding attendance. Parents have real time access to their child's attendance through the SIMS App. Information on attendance is also provided to parents in the termly progress check.

To help us all to focus on this we will: Schools to add/delete/amend as required – below is an example provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular/weekly home school bulletin/newsletter/website report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/ events set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in the school run events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

### **2. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Assistant Headteacher - School Attendance Leader**

A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep

#### **HUB**

HUB team (DH, AHT Safeguarding, AHT Curriculum and SENDCO). Fortnightly meetings to discuss students requiring HUB support to improve attendance. Referrals made by the Attendance officer to AHT. Actions and decisions of support offered through this team.

## **Attendance Officer**

Reports directly to the Assistant Headteacher. They monitor attendance on a daily basis and carry out first day calls. The attendance officer will prepare and send out attendance letters on behalf of the Head of House and Assistant Headteacher. The Attendance Officer will also carry out safeguarding calls to students in Alternative Provision or on long term absence.

## **Tutor**

The tutor is responsible for:

- keeping an accurate record of attendance for am and pm sessions and coding as necessary.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the Head of House on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence. Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

## **Head of House**

The Head of House is responsible for:

- monitoring attendance for their House.
- communicate with parents and intervene when attendance is between 86% and 96%.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

## **Students**

The Student is responsible for:

- Attending every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the House Office if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

## **Parents/Carers**

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- inform the school on the first day of absence and each consecutive day via the online absence form on the QE website.
- discuss with the tutor/class teacher any planned absences well in advance support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance - this must be agreed with the headteacher. In term holiday requests will be unauthorised.

## Ongoing

Tutor and Attendance Officer

- Monitor weekly attendance data
- AO to make first day calls
- Teachers keep accurate registers

Tutor identifies to Head of House of any concerns regarding attendance

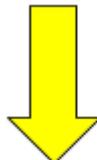
Attendance Officer prepares 96% and below letters and logs medical documents on SIMS

Attendance Officer prepares 90% and below letters and logs medical documents on SIMS

100%



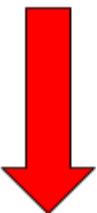
96%



92%



85%



60%

## Intervention

Assistant Headteacher (AHT) sends Initial attendance letter sent in September to all parents informing them of the school attendance policy and procedures

Tutors support those of attendance between 100-92%

Head of House(HOH) sends 96% and below letter. Monitors attendance. Refers to Attendance officer once at 85%.

20 sessions of illness - Head of House letter.

Discuss with parents.

No further authorisation without medical documentation

Persistent lateness - Head of House letter.

Discuss with parents

HoH refers to AHT at

85% or below - letter sent

Attendance officer support between 85-60%

Attendance officer refers to HUB team once below 60%

Hub support offered at 60%

including a referral to Dorset Council Inclusion Team and/or Panel meeting

## **Section 3 - Recording and Coding**

### **1. Recording attendance**

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, 8.40am, and again for the afternoon session at 2:50 pm.

### **2. Lateness and punctuality**

The official register is taken at 08:40am. A student will have an unauthorised lateness when the official register closes at 9:00am. However, lateness due to school bus delays will be marked as an authorised late (coded L) after 9am.

If a student arrives in school between 08:40 and 09:00 they must register with their tutor. If a student arrives in school after 09:00 they must go to the House Office and register with the Attendance Officer.

Persistent lateness to school will result in an after school detention. If a student is more than 3 minutes late to a lesson without a valid reason they will be placed in an after school detention

All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary. Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded U in line with Dorset Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence. If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, Dorset Council will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice in accordance with: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools (See Section 6 of this policy for further detail).

### **3. What to do if my child is absent?**

This section should set out the school's expectations of parents in reporting any absence and set out the school's internal procedures for responding to a child's absence.

#### **First day absence**

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must:

- Complete the online absence form before 08:30, a link can be found on the homepage of the QE website. Provide as much information as possible.

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance
- invite you in to discuss the situation with our attendance officer, Head of House and assistant headteacher if absences persist
- refer the matter to the Dorset Council Attendance and Inclusion Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

### **Third day absence**

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start child missing in education procedures as set down by Dorset Council and Department of Education guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family or visit the primary home address.

### **Ten days' absence**

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **Continued or ongoing absence**

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absences thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, we will invite you in for a meeting to discuss the reasons and put together a plan to improve your child's attendance

## Section 4 - Leave of absence requests

Request for leave of absence Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)

Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family.

There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in a leave of absence form available on the QE website in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Dorset Children's Services penalty notice protocol, parents/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code (see Section 6 for detail). Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

## Section 5 - Types of Absences

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence.

There are two main categories of absences:

**Authorised absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. This could include:

- participation in a sporting activity where the child is participating at county or national level
- A funeral
- A medical appointment - dentist, hospital etc
- An interview e.g for a college place or an apprenticeship
- Religious observation
- An external examination eg music or ballet exam

**Unauthorised absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request.

This includes:

- parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been explained.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

## **Section 6 - Penalty Notices and other legal measures**

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Dorset Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance.

### **Penalty Notices**

For national guidance refer to: Parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance, which covers legal measures for non-attendance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

For Dorset Council guidance refer to:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/at-school/school-attendance>

The following has been taken from Dorset County Council Children's Services Penalty Notice Protocol:

### **Rationale for Issuing Penalty Notices**

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities.

Children's Services will continue to investigate cases of non-attendance from school and, following appropriate casework, instigate legal action if applicable. In law, an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at the school at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school.

Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under section 444 Education Act 1996 or section 36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate. Children's Services delivers this LA responsibility.

## **Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be used**

Penalty Notices can only be issued in cases where a pupil of compulsory school age has been absent and the absence has not been authorised by the school or where the pupil has persistently arrived late after the register has closed.

The level of absence that is necessary before a Penalty Notice can be issued is 10 or more half days of unauthorised absence within a 12 school week period. The key consideration in deciding whether to issue a Penalty Notice will be whether it can be effective in helping to get the pupil who is missing education back into school.

A Penalty Notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy, where the parent is considered capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so.

To ensure consistent and fair delivery of Penalty Notices, the following criteria for their use shall apply:

No one parent will receive more than three separate Penalty Notices resulting from the unauthorised absence of an individual child in any twelve month period. However, where families contain more than one poorly attending pupil, multiple issues may occur.

## **Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices**

Dorset Council Children's Services will issue Penalty Notices for all Dorset Schools. Penalty Notices will only be issued by first class post and never as an on the spot action; this is to satisfy that all evidential requirements are in place and to meet health and safety requirements.

Children's Services will receive requests from schools, Dorset Police and neighbouring LAs. Requests from Schools will be sent to the School Attendance Team following discussion with a member of the Team.

A Penalty Notice may be issued providing it does not conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other enforcement sanctions already being processed. Children's Services will respond to all requests within 10 school days of receipt and where all criteria are met, will:

In cases of unauthorised absence

- Issue a formal warning to the parent/carer of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being used.
- In the same letter set a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence.
- Issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 15 day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved

## **Unauthorised Leave in Term Time**

In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended a Penalty Notice can be issued in exceptional circumstances, for example where a parent takes a child on holiday during term time without the school authorising the absence. In such circumstances, although a minimum of 10 half day sessions of unauthorised absence will still apply before a Penalty Notice may be issued, the authorised person may issue a Penalty Notice without first issuing a formal warning to the parent as would otherwise be required. However s/he should still be satisfied that the parent was informed beforehand that, in some exceptional circumstances e.g. term time holiday, unauthorised absence could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued without further warning.

## **Who can receive a Penalty Notice?**

Any Penalty Notice issued must be addressed to one parent but a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences. An authorised person has discretion when deciding whether to issue one or more parents of a child with a Penalty Notice. This is to enable account to be taken of the specific circumstances in individual cases.