

**Queen Elizabeth's School**  
**PUPILS' ATTENDANCE POLICY**  
**(incorporating procedures for the management of pupils'**  
**attendance and punctuality)**

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## **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, including 'Working together to improve school attendance' (DfE, 2024).

## **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 child receives a suitable full-time education and 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.

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- 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 by email ([absence@gebarnet.co.uk](mailto:absence@gebarnet.co.uk)) or by leaving a voicemail on the pupil absence line (020 8441 4646). Unless authorisation has been granted in advance, parents should report their son's absence each day until his return to School.
- 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, including by departing or returning on the days immediately before or after a School holiday.
- 3.6 Parents should raise any concern they have regarding their son's attendance with his Form Tutor or Head of Year in the first instance, in order that the issues can be explored through the School's pastoral support structures.

**The School**

- 3.7 The School expects all pupils to maintain at least 95% attendance.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 Registers will be taken electronically throughout the day and will be completed in accordance with standardised Department for Education register codes.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 The School will ensure that any unexplained absences are investigated immediately, with parents contacted by text message (or other appropriate form of communication) at 9.30am on the day of an unexplained absence.
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 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. Attendance data at the individual and cohort level is analysed to inform strategies and interventions, with particular attention paid to those with comparatively low levels of attendance.

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- 3.14 The School will ensure the governors receive at least an annual report on attendance (though, in practice, attendance will be discussed regularly at board meetings) and that attendance forms part of governors' review of safeguarding arrangements.
- 3.15 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.
- 3.16 The School will work with multi-agency partners, where appropriate, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, and support is not working or not being engaged with, may support the enforcement of attendance through statutory intervention. This may involve a local authority issuing a penalty notice in line with the National Framework, or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.
- 3.17 The School will appoint a senior member of staff to serve as Senior Attendance Champion, who will lead the School's efforts to promote high attendance. The School's champion is Mr D Ryan (Deputy Head, Pastoral). Mr Ryan can be contacted via email to [enquiries@qebarnet.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@qebarnet.co.uk)

### **Pupils**

- 3.18 Pupils will attend School each day as a matter of course and make every effort to maintain high attendance, only being absent where this has been pre-authorised by the School, or where genuine significant illness, or other unavoidable circumstances, prevent this.
- 3.19 Pupils will be punctual when arriving at School in the morning and will attend all registration periods and lessons on time, recognising that a failure to be punctual not only disrupts the learning of that pupil but also the learning of others.
- 3.20 Pupils will arrive at each lesson properly equipped and ready to learn.
- 3.21 Pupils must follow all School procedures regarding late arrival at, and early departure from, School – ensuring that they sign in and out.

### **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;

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- Interviews at university;
- Voluntary service;
- 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;
- Suspension (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.

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**Covid-19**

- 4.3 Covid-19 is now managed in the same way as other respiratory viruses. If a pupil has Covid-19 symptoms, or has tested positive, they may still attend school providing they feel well enough to do so. If they are too unwell to attend, their absence should be reported daily - as would be the case for other illnesses. Symptomatic and asymptomatic testing is no longer required or encouraged by the government.

**5. RECORDING ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

- 5.1 The School Buildings are open to pupils from 8.30am, with the Dining hall opening earlier for breakfast. Pupils 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 ready for afternoon registration at the published time for their respective year group each day. Registration normally begins at either 1.40pm or 2pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays (depending upon year group), and starts at 1.40pm for everyone on Wednesdays and Fridays. 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](mailto:absence@qebarnet.co.uk) or leave a voicemail on Option 1 of the School's main system.
- 5.7 For pupils identified as persistently absent or late, their Form Tutor or Head of Year may follow up directly with their parents to investigate their whereabouts and the reason for absence. This may involve encouraging the pupil to make their way into School, where the reason for absence is not considered to be strong, and/or considering ways to avoid being late.
- 5.8 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.

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- 5.9 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.
- 5.10 Sixth Formers must be present at School for both am and pm registration (unless they have prior permission from their Head of Year). They must not leave the premises before the start of lunch at 12.40pm without prior permission. Those who have free periods after PM registration may sign out and are not expected to return to the premises.
- 5.11 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](mailto:absence@qebarnet.co.uk) or telephone the main School number (leaving a voicemail message) 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).

### **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](mailto: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.

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- 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; and
  - 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.

## **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.

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- 7.4 The School reserves the right to invite parents into School to discuss any attendance issues which raise safeguarding concerns. The School will liaise with multi-agency partners, notably local authorities, where significant safeguarding concerns arise.

#### **Persistent absence**

- 7.5 If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, his attendance will be monitored particularly closely. Often this 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.
- 7.7 Investigations into persistent absence may appropriately involve medical professionals and the offer of counselling services to better understand if there are underlying issues relating to the pupil's health or wellbeing.

#### **Long-term absence**

- 7.8 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.
- 7.9 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.
- 7.10 The Head of Year, in consultation with individual tutors, will make arrangements for appropriate work to be organised for the pupil, with agreement on what needs to be returned and by when. Digital technologies may provide enhanced means to deliver some materials and support measures.
- 7.11 The Head of Year will liaise with the Examinations Officer over any special arrangements that need to be made regarding public examinations.
- 7.12 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. Examples might include a phased return, building up the time spent in school, or a temporary change to their curriculum.

#### **Measures parents can take to improve attendance**

- 7.13 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.



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- 7.14 Parents should be familiar with the routines of the School day.
- 7.15 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.
- 7.16 Parents should be particularly watchful and supportive in the run up to examinations and tests, and be aware of coursework deadlines.
- 7.17 Parents should speak to the School immediately if there are any concerns about attendance.
- 7.18 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.
- 7.19 Parents should avoid taking family holidays in term-time and try to arrange all non-urgent medical and dental appointments outside of School hours.
- 7.20 Parents are able to monitor their son's daily and cumulative attendance at any time via eQE.

## **8. SANCTIONS AND REWARDS**

### **Rewards for good attendance**

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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.

### **Sanctions for lateness**

- 8.3 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.
- 8.4 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**

- 8.5 Any issues concerning truancy (including internal truancy, where pupils purposefully avoid attending lessons despite being in School) will be dealt with as a disciplinary issue and sanctioned accordingly under the School's Pupil Discipline procedures.

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- 8.6 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.

**Dealing with unauthorised absence**

- 8.7 The School recognises that absence from school can be a symptom of wider issues affecting a child and/or their family. In the first instance the School will seek to understand the reasons for absence and offer appropriate support to deal with any issues that are identified as barriers to regular attendance.
- 8.8 If the School's efforts to offer support to improve a pupil's attendance are not engaged with positively, or multiple intervention strategies are ineffective, cases may be escalated to the local authority.
- 8.9 Where judged to be appropriate, or where unauthorised absent is taken wilfully (e.g. in the case of a term-time holiday, with no reasonable explanation), the local authority may decide to issue parents with a fine under the terms of the National Framework for Penalty Notices.
- 8.10 It is the responsibility of the local authority to decide when to issue fines to parents, meaning the process varies from council to council. However, under the national rules, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution may be considered.

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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*
  - Pupil Supervision 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
  - Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
  - Working together to improve school attendance: Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, DfE, 2024

Approved by the Governing Body on 7 November 2024

Signed .....

A.N. Gaskell, Chair of the Governing Body