

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Outstanding Achievement for All

Introduction

This document has been written to help understand the legalities of pupil attendance, the Local Authority's structure and support in attendance matters, and to provide some examples of good practice.

The Government expects schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring all children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and arrive to school on time.

Schools must be consistent and focused on raising standards in pupils' education and ensuring all students reach their full potential. However, with this, students need to attend school regularly to benefit fully from their education.

The Law

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their Young People of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their Young Person's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a Young Person of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the Academy, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) or 444(1a) of the Education Act 1996.

This advice summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, Head Teachers, School staff, Governing bodies, Students and parents/carers/guardians. These requirements are contained in:

- the Education Act 1996 - Sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6);
- the Education (student registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- the Education (student registration) (England) (amendment) Regulations 2010; and,
- the Education (student registration) (England) (amendment) Regulations 2011
- the Education (student registration) (England) (amendment) Regulations 2013
- Children Missing Education (September 2016)

The school has a legal responsibility to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their student attends school regularly. Our staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Your continued support in this matter is essential. Please work with us.

Objectives

- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
- To inform parents of attendance and punctuality issues on a day to day basis.
- To identify pupils that are a cause for concern around their attendance looking at patterns etc
- To identify causes of non-attendance and take action to resolve.
- To improve attendance of individuals, groups and the Academy.
- To reward young people with excellent attendance and provide incentives for children where attendance needs to improve (in accordance with the Rewards and Sanctions Policy)

It is the expectation of the school that all pupils will achieve at least 96% attendance. There are a variety of reasons for pupils missing school. Some are unavoidable but we would ask that you support us in ensuring that your pupil's attendance meets both the Academy and the government's expectations.

Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties are best resolved by the school, the parents and the pupil at an early stage. We will closely monitor your child's attendance and alert you if we feel there is an issue. The school undertakes a wide range of measures to support pupils where attendance at school is an issue. Where there may be an issue and we fail to see an improvement, it may be necessary to make a referral to an appropriate external agency to ensure the pupil receives the support required to bring about an improvement.

Attendance Banding

Descriptor	Attendance	Equals absent number of days	Learning hours lost
Excellent	100%	0	0
	99%	2	10
Good	98%	4	20
	97%	6	30
	96%	7.5	37.5
Satisfactory	95%	9.5	47.5
Cause for Concern	90%	19	95
	89%	21	105
	88%	23	115
	87%	25	125
Unsatisfactory	86%	27	135
Serious cause for concern	85%	28.5	142
	84%	30.5	152
	83%	32	160
	82%	34	170
	81%	36	180

100% - 98% Attendance – Excellent

As well as being an excellent attender, your child will almost certainly achieve the best grades for their ability and have real opportunity in further education or the world of work

- Certificates and Rewards recognising achievement
- Teachers will monitor these students with support from Heads of Year

97% - 96% Attendance - Good

Your child is likely to achieve their grades that will give them real opportunities to continue their studies or in the world of work.

- Teachers will monitor these pupils with support from Heads of Year. Some may have support from Inclusion & Attendance Leads where necessary.

95% - 92% Attendance – Unsatisfactory

Pupils are below the national government threshold of 96%. Your child will miss up to 18 days each school year and this will make it difficult for them to achieve their potential.

- Incentives to increase attendance to target level of 96% or above
- Letter to parents encouraging Young People to improve their attendance towards the target of 96% or above
- Involvement from Vice Principal, Family Support Worker and possibly Inclusion and attendance Leads.
- School contracts may be brought in to encourage and improve school attendance

92%- 85% Attendance - Concern

Parents / Carers may face a fixed penalty fine as your child's attendance is below 90% and they are 'Persistent Absentees'. Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be difficult for them to keep up with work completed in lessons.

- Meetings with parents and young people to discuss reasons for poor attendance.
- Unscheduled home visits.
- Interventions designed to encourage pupils to want to be in lessons.
- Letter to parents encouraging improvement in attendance, reminding that attendance levels directly relate to achievement and informing them that if attendance does not improve, there is likely to be a referral to Inclusion Leads / Family Support Worker.

85% - 0% Attendance - Serious Concern

- School Inclusion / Attendance Lead to work alongside Principal in regards to issue fixed penalty notices and likely to prosecute through the courts.

- Parents / Guardians to attend meeting in school with School Attendance / Inclusion Lead / Principal to try to resolve.
- Persistent Absentees will receive unscheduled or scheduled home visits from Attendance / Inclusion Lead / Family support Work / Principal; some may have involvement with Social Care.

Responsibilities

Parents/carers/guardians should:

- See themselves and the school in partnership with respect to pupils' attendance.
- Understand they have the greatest influence and responsibility with regards to attendance.
- Communicate and reinforce to pupils the correlation between attendance and achievement.
- Telephone the School Office to report an absence on the first day a pupil is absent from school and update the same way each day of absence.
- When medical appointments cannot be made out of school hours, communicate with the school any upcoming medical appointments or absences that the student will have. Parents must provide written explanation for all Young People's absences from Academy. Any unexplained absences will be marked as unauthorised.
- Ensure that the Academy has the correct and current contact details for parents/carers in case of emergency situations. We cannot release a pupil from the Academy without permission from a parent.
- Communicate any concerns they may have that could be affecting their child's attendance to school.
- Attend any meetings that the school has arranged with regards to attendance.
- Ensure that Young People arrive in the Academy to register at 8.55am every term day.
- Support the Academy in motivating all pupils to achieve at least 96% attendance.
- Avoid taking pupils out of the Academy during term time except in special circumstances with permission from the Principal.

Students should:

- Understand that good attendance leads to the best chance of attaining and building a sound foundation for future success.
- Arrive at school on time every day (no later than 8.55 am)
- Ensure that they are personally supporting themselves to attend school to the best of their ability by:
 - Feeling safe & secure
 - Maintaining a healthy lifestyle – diet and adequate sleep
 - Participating in spiritual, cultural and social development
 - Feeling empowered and taking responsibility

Queen's Park Academy should:

- Remind parents/carers/guardians of the importance of ensuring their child's regular, uninterrupted school attendance.
- Update parents/carers/guardians on attendance regularly.
- Communicate regularly with parents/carers/guardians with regard attendance issues.
- Organise meetings, home visits and external meetings with families.
- Use legal means to enforce an improvement in attendance.
- Monitor closely those students with attendance percentages that cause concern, specifically those who are regularly below 96%.
- Offer additional support for students with more challenging attendance difficulties.
- Complete a CME (Child Missing in Education) form after any prolonged absence from school and refer to the local authority.
- Place all pupils with more challenging attendance on a Pastoral Support Plan and ensure we look for possible support and interventions to improve school attendance.
- Support pupils through additional provision when attendance issues are hindering inclusion. This will be through support groups in school, reduced timetables, additional rewards or different academic routes being offered.
- Ensure that all contact details are up-to-date for the students' families and emergency contact numbers.
- Work alongside the Attendance and Inclusion Leads to ensure that teachers are competing registers and also to complete any relevant register checks and class checks.

The Attendance and Inclusion Leaders should:

- Ensure that the whole school community is aware of this policy and works towards improving attendance using the available means.
- Ensure that staff are clear about their responsibility to keep registers up to date at all times and also be vigilant in reporting concerns over attendance
- Monitor attendance for all year groups and communicate these figures with the Vice Principal and Inclusion Lead. This will also include figures such as PA rates, yearly attendance, punctuality and individual pupil attendance.
- Support all pupils in school with their attendance, particularly the most vulnerable groups including those with mental health diagnoses, long term absentees due to illness, Pupil Premium students, Looked After Children, those on Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) etc.
- Aim for a year group attendance of 96%.
- Check weekly attendance report – decide on and action next steps and interventions for key pupils.
- Make regular contact (text/phone/letter/email/meetings) with parents for both positive reinforcement and for concerns relating to attendance.
- Carry out home visits when appropriate.
- To ensure parents/carers/guardians understand the importance of good attendance.

- To use, if necessary, any legal means to ensure parents/carers get their child(ren) to attend school regularly.
- To complete referrals to the SAW or any other external services to support an improvement in attendance.

Monitor Integris and make adjustments to ensure accurate data such as medical appointments and absences.

- Communicate absences, lates and unauthorised absences to the Vice Principal on a daily basis.
- Provide regular attendance information
- Contact home to chase reasons for non-attendance and arrange meetings relating to attendance.

The Teaching Staff should:

- Be a good role model for pupils, by being punctual and prepared.
- Give positive praise for pupils for arriving on time.
- Keep an accurate register.
- Take prompt action where children are late or absent without explanation.

Factors which impact on attendance

Medical Appointments

'Medical Evidence' or 'Medical Authorisation Cards' from the doctors are requested to confirm your child has attended a medical appointment. This is to try to ensure the student is attending to their best potential and also to support any referrals the school may need to do.

We are not requesting a letter detailing the issues or reasons behind the pupil's absence, unless it is to the benefit of the student, such as an upcoming operation.

Reluctance or refusal to go to school

Sometimes pupils seem anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may tell you that they feel unwell or give another reason to not attend. You may notice that they are worried from things that they say e.g. that they do not want to do particular subjects, feel that they have no friends or are being bullied.

Lateness

If a pupil arrives in the Academy after 9.15 am, this will be recorded and will contribute towards their overall attendance percentage. All lateness will be addressed by the Attendance and Inclusion Leaders.

Appendix 1: Requests for Leave of Absence in Term Time.

If pupils are to reach their potential, they need to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular, uninterrupted school attendance is a key factor in helping students reach their potential. Every effort should always be made to avoid disruption to a pupil's education.

Following amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into effect 1st September 2013, Principals are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances. The decision as to whether any request is considered as 'exceptional circumstances' rests solely with the Principal.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short; 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

In considering whether or not to authorise a request for exceptional leave of absence in term time, the Principal will look at each individual case and only grant authorisation if the circumstances are truly exceptional. Additionally, any request should be made prior to the leave of absence and should be submitted to the school using the Request for Leave of Absence form available from the school office. Parents/Carers may be asked to provide additional information/evidence or meet with the school to discuss the circumstances.

Parents/Carers will be notified of the Principal's decision at the earliest opportunity. If the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional then parents/carers will be informed of this and made aware that the Local Authority may be asked to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Leave of absence taken in term time and issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice to parents.

Under the amended regulations, a Principal can agree to a leave of absence in term time only where there are 'exceptional circumstances'. No leave of absence should be agreed unless the Principal is satisfied that there are such exceptional circumstances. The school should make the parents aware of this possibility as far as possible and this possibility should also clearly be stated in the school's attendance policy and in other information the school provides for parents such as the school's handbook provided to parents, student planners, school website, newsletters, open day and new starter information packs.

When a leave of absence is taken and the school has not authorised the absence, the school may request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice. Before requesting this, the school must ensure that, as far as possible, the parent was aware that this may occur. Requests for Penalty Notices should be made by the school and signed by

the Principal or nominated Deputy as soon as possible after the holiday is taken. This should be no longer than 15 school days following the student's return.

Appendix 2: Requests for Fixed Penalty Notices in relation to unauthorised leave of absence

As per the amended Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations, Principals are prohibited from granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

No leave of absence should be agreed unless the Principal is satisfied that there are such exceptional circumstances. The school should make the parents aware of this and also the fact that if the unauthorised leave is taken then the school may request the LA issued a FPN. This should be clearly stated in the school's attendance policy and in other information the school provides for parents such as the school's handbook provided to parents, student planners, school website, newsletters, open day and new starter information packs.

A Penalty Notice may be issued:

- Where a parent has taken the pupil on a leave of absence during term-time without the school's authorisation and there are unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days).
- If a second leave of absence is taken during term-time within any 12 month period without the school's authorisation and there are unauthorised absences of at least 2 sessions (1 school day).
- Where the school has agreed to a specific number of sessions of leave during term-time due to exceptional circumstances, and any additional sessions of unauthorised leave have been taken outside of the agreed period.

Requests for Penalty Notices should be made by the school and signed by the Principal or nominated Deputy using the 'Unauthorised leave in term time Fixed Penalty Notice Request' template no longer than 15 school days following the pupil's return.

When submitting an 'Unauthorised Leave in Term Time Fixed Penalty Notice Request', schools should also provide the following:

- Copy of the parent's request and school's response (if no request was received, schools must provide evidence to support that the absence was due to an unauthorised leave of absence)
- An attendance printout for the pupil which includes the period of unauthorised leave of absence.
- Up to date contact details for parents if not provided on the parental request form.

- Details of siblings who also had an unauthorised leave of absence. Schools are responsible for completing sibling checks.

Legal Interventions and School's role.

Fixed Penalty Notice Warning Letters and Fixed Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices were introduced under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 in February 2004. They can be issued in four different circumstances:

- for an unauthorised leave of absence
- in the case of an excluded Pupil found in a public place
- if a warning period has been unsuccessful
- where parenting contracts have been unsuccessful, not complied with or where parents are unwilling to sign a contract.

A Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letter gives a parent(s) 25 school days to improve attendance. If the level of absence during the warning period is 10.1% or over, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

As a school, we can request a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning Letter prior to SAW involvement.

At the end of a warning period, there should be discussion with the parent(s) and - where appropriate - the pupil, to consider the outcome and what next steps are required.

If the attendance has improved, what changes did the family make and how can they maintain them?

Is anything else required by the family to ensure this positive change can be sustained?

If the warning period was unsuccessful then what could have been done differently?

Does the family require additional support?

Schools and their SAW should discuss and agree the next steps following this notice period.

Prosecution

There are two offences that a parent can be prosecuted for under the Education Act 1996.

If they fail to ensure their child is receiving an appropriate education;

- a basic offence under section 444(1)
- an aggravated offence under section 444(1a).

Both offences require a pupil to have 10.1% or over unauthorised absence.

If found guilty of a basic offence, a parent can be fined up to £1000. Documents for the prosecution include a Principal's Certificate which states the pupil's attendance.

This will be completed by the SAW on your behalf but will require the Principal's signature prior to submission to the court.

An aggravated offence carries a higher penalty if found guilty, a fine of up to £2500 or a custodial sentence of up to 3 months.

As well as the Principal's Certificate, the school will need to provide a witness statement which highlights that the parent/s was aware of the absences. This would typically be in the form of the school's absence log. Support to schools for the completion of these statements is available at no cost from the Borough's Legal Services.

Appendix 3: Student Missing Education Procedures

Safeguarding

The Academy reserves the right to invite parents into school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns, i.e. – female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, forced marriage, radicalisation.

In addition, if the school suspects that a student may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school, the safeguarding team reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies, ie – social care, police.

The school will inform parents / carers if a referral is to be made. However, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent / carer.

Child Missing In Education

The school follows the LSCB procedures "Identifying and maintaining contact with student missing or at risk of going missing from Education 2013". Under section 8h of the Education Regulations Act (2006), the school will make 'reasonable' enquiries into the location of students with 10 days continuous unauthorised absence or for those who fail to return from leave of absence granted during term time.

We are committed to ensuring the safety of that pupil through our Child Missing In Education procedure. The reason for the procedure is that the school recognises that when a student goes missing from school it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, ie – sexual abuse or exploitation.

Every attempt will be made to communicate with parents to ensure the pupil is safe and well, including home visits by Principal. The school will contact relevant agencies after two days' absence without confirmation from parents / carers if the pupil is

subject to a 'Child in Need' plan or considered vulnerable in other ways. There are many circumstances where a pupil may become missing from education, as outlined below:

- pupils at risk of harm / neglect
- Pupil of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families (school will inform local authority when a GRT student leaves the school without identifying a new destination school)
- Families of Armed Forces (school will contact MOD Student's Education Advisory Service for advice on making arrangements for continuity of education)
- Missing pupil / runaways (direct referral to Student's Services and Police)

When a pupil returns from a period of extended absence, appropriate daily attendance checks will be carried out and their attendance, behaviour, emotional and physical wellbeing will be monitored closely by the safeguarding team in school.

Parents / carers may be invited into school with the pupil to meet the Head of Year, Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Inclusion / Attendance Leader as part of the reintegration programme and relevant support will be offered to the student / family as necessary.

Procedure for pupil – Left school with no trace.

The procedure is there for any pupil that has been absent from school since day 1. Each pupil is reviewed daily with their absence and parents are contacted on each day when their pupil is absent. If we cannot get hold of the parent, it is known as unauthorised absence. On each day, we have a procedure to ensure the right safety protocol is in place.

Schools have a statutory duty to refer pupils who are continuously absent for 20 school days or more. **However, we do not have to wait 20 days if we feel there are concerns.**

Children missing education – Notifying Local authority

When a child leaves and the Academy have a named destination school, "reporting form for pupil removed from school roll or missing" (known as the CME form) is completed. Forms are to be returned to the Local Authority admissions team within three working days. A copy is kept electronically on the Academy system. The Academy also makes an initial check that the young person has arrived at the receiving school.

When the Academy has been notified that a pupil is leaving, but a destination school has not been confirmed, a full forwarding address for the family (whether in this country or abroad) will be requested from the family. Where a permanent address is not available a temporary address will suffice. If this is also unavailable then a telephone number or email address will be requested so that contact can be

maintained with the family after the pupil has left, until an address or school can be confirmed. A CME Form will be completed and returned to the Local Authority admissions team within three working days.

Where a pupil has disappeared without notification and is no longer believed to be at their address, the Academy will make initial enquiries including the following actions:-

- telephoning all known numbers, including ALL emergency contact numbers
- carrying out an unscheduled home visit
- asking siblings, relatives, friends and peers in the Academy for information, or checking if anyone is still in touch via social networking sites.
- telephoning other schools where relatives or siblings are known to attend
- sending first class letter to home address requesting immediate phone call from parent to the Academy.

Where these initial enquiries are unsuccessful the Academy will notify the Admissions team immediately by telephone or email with the "reporting form for pupil removed from school roll or missing" to follow without delay. The Local Authority will then commence missing student procedures.

In situations where the Academy is informed by the parent/carer/relative that the pupil is missing, the **Academy will immediately alert the Police and pupil and Young People's Social Care**, even if parents are reporting that they have already done this. The Academy will mark the reporting form as urgent, and make it clear on the form who alerted the Academy, and the contact details of the person spoken to in Police and Student and Young People's Social Care.

The Academy will update the Admissions team with any further information about a missing pupil.

The Academy will wait for confirmation from local authority before removing the young person from roll

Schools have a statutory duty to refer pupils who are continuously absent for 10 school days or more. **However, we do not have to wait 20 days if we feel there are concerns.**

