



Primary Attendance Policy

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Introduction

Promoting good school attendance is everyone's responsibility.

QEGSMAT strives to ensure that all its schools create an environment which enables and encourages all pupils to reach their full potential. For pupils to achieve in accordance with their potential and to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly.

QEGSMAT understands that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, QEGSMAT schools should prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with all pupils and parents/carers.

Aims

All of the schools within QEGSMAT are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos which values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance and supporting punctuality in attending lessons.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this policy is clear and easily understood by staff and pupils' parents/carers.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Intervening early to address patterns of absence and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of other pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance and ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

“The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.

This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.”

DfE Working Together to improve School Attendance (August 2024).

Roles and responsibilities

The Trustees and governing body of each school is responsible for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school’s policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing, monitoring and challenging attendance data.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance appropriate to their role.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- As best practice, QEGSMAT recommends that schools utilise the Headteacher report to Governors to share attendance figures to report on attendance.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at their school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school’s attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The designated Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Have an oversight of data analysis.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Monitor and analyse attendance data.
- Benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Provide regular attendance reports to school staff and report concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher.
- Work with Education Welfare Officers, and other professionals, to tackle persistent absence.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time. All children should arrive and be in their classroom ready to learn when registration closes. This enables all of our children to arrive on time for a settled start to the school day.
- Call the school to report any unplanned absence before the start of the school day on the day of the absence. We ask that this is undertaken for every day that a child is absent, advising when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- Avoid booking holidays in term time. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance and this will not be authorised.

Recording Attendance

The attendance register will be taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session. It will record whether pupils are present or absent.

Please see Appendix 1 for Attendance Codes and details regarding authorised / unauthorised absence.

** Attendance records will be kept for six years from the date of first entry.*

Absence Procedures:

If your child is unable to attend school or nursery for any reason, or will be late, please contact the school by 9:15am and leave a message on the absence line stating:

- Your child's name and year group.
- Full reason for the absence giving full details if unwell.

** If your child has sickness or diarrhoea we ask that he/she does not return to school for 48 hours after the last episode of illness as this type of illness can be very infectious.*

If you are unsure of whether to keep them off, how long they should be off for or when to send them back, then there is a useful link on our website 'should my child go to school?' <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Yourchildatschool/Pages/Illness.aspx> which links to the NHS information and guidelines.

Please send your child to school as much as you possibly can and be assured that if they are unwell we will contact you and send them home if necessary.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

School Start and End times:

Start time	Lessons Start	Registration Closes	Afternoon Registration	School ends
KS1: 8:35 am KS2: 8:45 am	KS1: 8:50 am KS2: 9:00 am	KS1: 9:05 am KS2: 9:15 am	1:00 pm	KS1: 3:20pm KS2: 3:30pm

Attendance Team Contact Details:

Sarah Stone Nicola Swift- Holdcroft	01782 550309	office@st-johns-wetleyrocks.staffs.sch.uk ssstone@st-johns-wetleyrocks.staffs.sch.uk
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Attendance monitoring

Lateness and Punctuality

Pupils who are absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended, will be marked in the register as late.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupils' emergency contacts, staff may conduct a home visit.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- If absence continues, the school should consider involving other agencies as appropriate e.g. follow local procedures for children missing education (CME).

Monitoring and Analysing Attendance and Punctuality

The Attendance Officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to identify patterns and trends, and barriers to attendance. This will ensure that intervention / support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence as soon as possible.

Specifically, where there is a safeguarding concern for a pupil absent or missing from education, the Attendance Officer will alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the school's established safeguarding recording and reporting processes.

The school will benchmark its attendance data against local, regional and national level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and should share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The whole school.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds
- Other groups of pupils e.g. pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), looked after children (LAC), and pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM).
- Pupils who have an allocated social worker or are known to social care.
- Pupils at risk of persistent absence (attendance between 80-90%).
- Pupils at risk of severe absence (attendance below 80%).

Reporting to parents/carers

Each school should regularly inform parents / carers about their child’s attendance, punctuality and absence levels with termly written reports. Attendance is also discussed during parents’ evening appointments which take place during the year.

Every Day Counts

When we report, we use the following percentages for guidance:

100%	0 days off school	0 lessons missed	Perfect!
97%	Equates to 5 days off school each year	Equates to approx. 25 lessons missed.	Good
95%	Equates to 10 days off school each year	Equates to approx. 50 lessons missed.	Slight concern
90%	Equates to 20 days off school each year	Equates to approx. 100 lessons missed.	Concern
85%	Equates to 30 days off school each year	Equates to approx. 150 lessons missed.	Major concern

Every Minute Counts

MINUTES LATE	IMPACT ON YOUR ATTENDANCE IN A YEAR
5 MINUTES A DAY =	3.4 days 98.4% attendance
10 MINUTES A DAY =	6.9 days 97.6% attendance
15 MINUTES A DAY =	10.3 days 94.6% attendance
20 MINUTES A DAY =	13.8 days 92.9% attendance
30 MINUTES A DAY =	20.7 days 89.2% attendance

We will contact you if your child's attendance becomes a concern:

If your child's attendance falls below 92%, we will contact you to discuss our concerns and offer support. You may be invited to an attendance meeting to complete an attendance contract.

Attendance below 90% is classed as 'persistent absence'. Your child is missing the equivalent of half a day of school per week. We will contact you to discuss our concerns and offer support. You may be invited to an attendance meeting to complete an attendance contract. Absence at this point will not be authorised without appropriate evidence. Please note that 10 sessions of absence in a 10 week rolling period may result in a 'Penalty Notice' or a 'Notice to Improve'. Please see below for more details.

How will we support you with attendance and punctuality?

- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Consider the support from our Early Help Offer to further improve attendance and/or punctuality.
- Use, where appropriate, attendance contracts to formally support attendance and/or punctuality.

Requesting absence in term time

What should parents / carers do if they wish to request absence in term time?

As advised by the Department for Education, the Headteacher will only grant leave during term time in exceptional circumstances. A regular holiday, regardless of parental holiday entitlement and issues, will not be authorised.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. Please request a form from the school office if you'd like to request leave during term time.

The head teacher will consider whether the leave will be authorised or unauthorised on an individual basis. This decision will be communicated in writing to the parent requesting the leave. If the absence is unauthorised, this does not prevent people taking the leave, however this may result in a 'Penalty Notice'.

When will a Penalty Notice be Issued?

1. There is unauthorised absence of least 10 sessions (each school day contains two sessions) **this may comprise of any unauthorised absence or late arrival** at school over a rolling period of 10 school weeks, excluding school holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years eg 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 unauthorised late arrivals in the Autumn Term.
***10 sessions is the new national threshold stated in the statutory guidance** (*Working Together to Improve School Attendance. DfE August 19th 2024.* Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities).
2. There is any period (of at least 2 sessions) of unauthorised absence for leave (e.g. family holiday / leisure activities) in term time not authorised by the head teacher, or a period of leave more than the period authorised by the head teacher.
3. The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded/suspended from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Please note that 1 session = half a school day.

What is a Penalty Notice?

- Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate as detailed below:
- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 per child per parent if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 per child per parent if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In this case where the criteria to issue a penalty notice is met for a third time within 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- All Penalty Notices are entered onto a database maintained by the Local Authority to ensure that no duplicate Penalty Notices are issued.
- In Staffordshire, Penalty Notices are issued by a Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.

What is a 'Notice to Improve'?

Where there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or late arrival in a rolling period of 10 school weeks the school may request the local authority (LA) to issue a Notice to Improve to a parent.

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If there is not sufficient improvement within the timeframe of the notice the LA will issue a penalty notice to the parent.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Trust.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes with effect from 19.8.24

Code	Summary	Rational	Classification of code
/	Present AM	The session is a morning session and the pupil is present at the school when the attendance register begins to be taken.	Attending
\	Present PM	The session is an afternoon session and the pupil is present at the school when the attendance register begins to be taken.	Attending
L	Late in registration time	The pupil is absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended.	Attending
K	Local Authority alternative provision	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the 1996 Act(12) or section 42(2) or 61(1) of the 2014 Act.	Attending an approved educational activity
V	Educational Visit	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the proprietor and supervised by a member of school staff.	Attending an approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity.	Attending an approved educational activity
w	Work Experience	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the proprietor as part of the pupil's education.	Attending an approved educational activity
B	School alternative provision	The pupil is attending a place for any other approved educational activity within paragraph (11) of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024	Attending an approved educational activity
M	Medical Appointment	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.	Authorised absence
J1	Interview	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.	Authorised absence
S	Study Leave	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Study Leave	Authorised absence
X	Not required to attend	The pupil is not of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend	Not a possible attendance
D	Dual Registered	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending another school at which they are a registered pupil. Dual Registered.	Not a possible attendance
C	Exceptional circumstances	The pupil is absent with leave for any other purpose.	Authorised absence

C1	Regulated performance	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Part-time timetable	The pupil is of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because, in accordance with an agreement between a parent who they normally live with and the proprietor that the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis, their timetable does not require them to attend.	Authorised absence
T	Traveller	The pupil is a mobile (i.e. Gypsy, Roma, Travelling) child, their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with that parent.	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	The day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a parent of the pupil belongs.	Authorised absence
I	Sickness	The pupil is unable to attend because of sickness.	Authorised absence
Q	Local Authority failed to make access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements for them within paragraph (12) or (13). Local authority failed to make access arrangements.	Not a possible attendance
Y1	Normal Transport failed	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from school that is normally provided for the pupil by the proprietor or a local authority is not available.	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Travel disruption due to emergency	The pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency.	Not a possible attendance
Y3	Partial school closure	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those who the proprietor thinks cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the premises that remain in use.	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Whole school closure	Whole school site unexpectedly closed.	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Child in custody	The pupil is unable to attend because they are in criminal justice detention.	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Public health guidance	Unable to attend in accordance with Public Health guidance or Law	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Other unavoidable cause	The pupil is unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance
E	Excluded or suspended	The pupil is excluded or suspended from the school for any other reason.	Authorised absence
G	Family Holiday	The pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday.	Unauthorised absence

N	Not yet known	The circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established.	Unauthorised absence
O	No reason or unsatisfactory reason	No reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes classified as authorised.	Unauthorised absence
U	Late after registration close	Arrived in school after the registration closed	Unauthorised absence
Z	Not on admission register	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Administration Code, not collected
#	Planned school closure	Planned whole school closure	Administration Code, not collected

Appendix 2: Key Contacts

Safeguarding Role	Name and Role	School contact details
Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead / SENDCo	Sarah Stone	ssone@st-johns-wetleyrocks.staffs.sch.uk 01782 550309
Governor for Attendance	Chair of Governors Lisa Rhodes	office@st-johns-wetleyrocks.staffs.sch.uk 01782 550309

Other Key Local Attendance Contacts

Education Welfare and Local Authority Children Missing Education (CME) Officer	See Children missing education guidance
Homelessness or at risk of homelessness	Staffordshire County Council homelessness

Key National Contacts

Organisation	Description and contact details
NSPCC helpline for adults	Helping adults protect children 24 hours a day. For help and support, including anyone needing advice about female genital mutilation, young people affected by gangs, concerns that someone may be a victim of modern slavery contact the NSPCC trained helpline counsellors on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text 88858 • 0808 800 5000 • help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education	Bespoke helpline for children and young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals who need support and guidance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0800 136 663 • help@nspcc.org.uk
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	Hosted by Refuge , Helpline 0808 2000247
Operation Encompass	Resources for schools include free advice from an Education Psychologist about how best to support children via National Helpline 0204 513 9990
Report Abuse in Education helpline	Young people who have experienced abuse at school and parents and teachers who are concerned about sexual abuse in education settings can call the Report Abuse in Education helpline on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk