

Attendance Policy

Queen's College, Taunton

October 2016 (v.2)

1. Aim

The aim of Queen's College attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

Queen's College takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

2. Legal framework

The DfE documents 'School Attendance November 2016' ([Appendix A](#)) and 'Children Missing Education September 2016' ([Appendix B](#)) are appended to this policy.

Queen's College is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has written this attendance policy accordingly.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Governing body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents and children to implement the policy effectively
- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children and staff
- take time at governors' meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have
- ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data

College Leadership Group ('CLG')

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the CGL team will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislative changes and how to implement them
- nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job

- report to the governing body annually
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (**see section 4**), and include an expected date for return
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Head Teacher (**see section 4.5**) using the Authorised Absence Request form ([Appendix C](#))

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- be aware of the school's attendance policy, and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents and the school timetable

- speak to their tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable
- follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (**see section 4.8**). Pupils are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all pupils what this procedure is by their form tutors. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation

4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. **Parents cannot authorise absences.**

Staff should make it clear on the school register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where staff have concerns regarding absences they should follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence. For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child.

4.1 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents must make a phone call to alert the school on each day of absence. When the child returns to school they should bring a note from their parent explaining the absence – this is for the school records.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents will be asked to provide the school with certified medical evidence such as a note from a qualified medical practitioner

4.2 Medical or dental appointments

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

4.3 Authorised absences

There may be some instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

4.4 Exclusion

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. The tutor will arrange for work to be sent home.

4.5 Family holidays and extended leave

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the Head Teacher 2 weeks in advance of the leave being taken using the Authorised Absence Request form (Appendix C). In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. The Head Teacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher's decision is final on whether the request is approved and the length of absence approved.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents may be subject to further action by the school or prosecution by the local authority.

4.6 Religious observance

Queen's College recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

4.7 Study leave

The school has a period of study leave leading up to GCSE and A Level examinations where pupils are granted authorised absence to revise at home. The school operates study sessions at school within this time to help with revision.

4.8 Late arrival

Registration begins at:

Senior School – 08:15 in the morning and 14:00 in the afternoon

Junior School – 08:20 in the morning and 13:15 in the afternoon

Pre-Prep – 08:30 in the morning and 13:30 in the afternoon

Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. **In Senior School the registration period ends at 08:30 in the morning and 14:15 in the afternoon.**

Pupils who arrive after the registration period has ended should go straight to the school office to sign in and give a reason for their lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is vital that pupils sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for.

Persistent lateness may result in disciplinary action.

4.9 Boarding Pupils

It is expected that children will live with their parents or their guardian when they are away from school during school holidays or weekends. Written authority must be given to the child's Houseparents before he or she leaves the school to stay with another family.

If a child is taken ill during a holiday or weekend and is unable to return to school the Boarding Houseparents should be notified. The Boarding Houseparent will always telephone the parents or guardians if the child fails to return to school by the allotted time.

5. School action: following up absences

Registers are passed to the school office at the end of the morning and afternoon registration periods. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the Houseparents and/or Deputy Head will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Parents will be contacted if a pupil gives a reason for an unauthorised absence and there is doubt about the truth of the excuse.

Houseparents will chase pupils for written explanation from their parents/carers for their absence upon the pupil's return from being away. This is for the school records and is necessary no matter what the reason or length of the absence.

Where pupils have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

Where a child has been absent from school for either 10 consecutive days or for 10 or more sessions in a 26-week window (1 session = half a day) and where the absence was unauthorised the school should inform the Local Authority. If both the school and the Local Authority have been unable to contact the parents, the school may remove the child from the school roll. The school will notify the local authority when such action is taken.

The school will take disciplinary action against any pupils who are discovered to be truanting and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help. The school may take further action against the parents, including referral to the local authority to begin criminal proceedings against the parents.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

- [Appendix A](#) DfE Document 'School Attendance – November 2016'
- [Appendix B](#) DfE Document 'Children Missing Education – September 2016'
- [Appendix C](#) Authorised Absence Request Form

Effective date of the policy	27 th January 2017
SLG Responsible Member	Andrew Free, Deputy Head

Authorised by	Board of Governors
Signed	Mark Edwards, Chair of Governors
Date	27 th January 2017