



## Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School

### Attendance Policy

**POLICY TITLE:** Attendance Policy

**STATUS:** Statutory

**REVIEWED BY:** Governing Board

**DATE of REVIEW:** April 2018

**DATE of NEXT REVIEW:** April 2021

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#### Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

1. Support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
2. Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
3. Enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
4. Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
5. Ensure the school's attendance level meets Government targets.

#### Being at school

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer.

As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student absence also disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the class.

Ensuring a student's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of the parent/carer and allowing absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## **Expectations**

### **We expect that all pupils will:**

- Attend school every day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day.
- Discuss promptly with their Form Tutor or Head of Year any problems that may affect their school attendance.

### **We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school on the day or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

### **We expect that the school will:**

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns.
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- Regularly inform parents of the percentage of attendance of all pupils.
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Educational Welfare Officer. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Educational Welfare Officer may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.
- Will notify Child Missing In Education Officer after 10 days unexplained absence.

## **Promoting regular attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, students and all school staff. At Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School we will investigate all unexplained absences and work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern.

### **To help us all focus the importance of good attendance we will:**

- Report to parents/carers on a termly basis on students' attendance and punctuality rate.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class badges and events.

Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals.

## Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences - the school may be prepared to authorise absences for the following reasons on receipt of appropriate evidence:

- Genuine illness of the pupil;
- Hospital appointment for the pupil, which cannot be arranged outside of school time;
- Major religious observance;
- External exams or educational assessments;
- Visits to prospective new schools;
- Emergencies or another unavoidable cause (where the school has given approval in advance for the child to be away);
- Where an explanation offered after an absence has been accepted as satisfactory justification for a student being absent from school;
- Compassionate leave for bereavement of close family member.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider to be reasonable. These types of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. These absences include:

- Shopping / day trip;
- A birthday treat;
- Oversleeping due to a late night;
- Routine dentist appointments;
- Looking after other children / family member;
- Appointments for other family members;
- Truancy for all or part of the school day;
- Students arriving at school after the register has closed;
- Unauthorised holidays in term time.

## Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student is classified as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. An individual is deemed to be a PA if their absence is less than 90% regardless of whether the absences have been authorised. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational attainment and we need parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this .

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral systems and with referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

## Absence Procedures

The following procedures are issued to all parents at the beginning of Year 7.

### If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;

### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Text you on the first day of an absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with your Head of Year and/or Assistant Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Educational Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 92%.

### **Telephone numbers**

There are times when we need to contact parents, including regarding absence queries. Therefore the school needs to have an up to date contact number at all times. It is important that parents help us to help you and your daughter by making sure we always have an up to date telephone number to contact you. There will be checks on telephone numbers and email addresses throughout the year.

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your daughter misses the start of the day she will miss work. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, and it can be embarrassing for the child, further encouraging absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.40am** and we expect your daughter to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **8.40am** and your daughter will receive a late mark if she is not in school by this time.

If a student arrives more than 5 minutes late to school on two occasions she will receive an after school detention the following week.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. If your daughter is late a letter is required to explain why this has happened. Persistent lateness may also result in a Local Authority penalty notice.

### **Authorising absence**

Amendments have been made to the 2013 pupil registration regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

Schools can no longer grant up to 10 days' leave in special circumstances for the purpose of family holiday. The 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holidays and schools may now only grant leave in 'exceptional' circumstances.

### **Penalties for unauthorised absence**

Amendments have been made to the 2013 penalty notices regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which also came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.

The amendments reduce the timescales for paying the fines for unauthorised absence. From September 2013, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days per absent child. These are payable to the Local Authority.

Extended absence from school for visits overseas may result in a student being removed from the school roll.

## **STAFF ROLES**

### **Form Tutor**

- Promotes habits of regular attendance and punctuality both with individuals and with the form group;
- Accurately completes electronic registers and responds to parental notes and unexplained absences by updating absence codes;
- Is alert to absence being condoned for illegitimate reasons;
- Is alert to emerging patterns of absence and lateness;
- Is aware of and consistent in applying school systems for monitoring and promoting attendance.
- Requests the support/intervention of the Year Head when appropriate.

### **Subject Teacher**

- Keeps an accurate electronic register of attendance for each lesson
- Updates the electronic register with students who are late to lessons and deals with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly
- Recognises that difficulties with learning can be an important factor in poor attendance;
- Explores methods of making specific provision for children who are frequent or long-term absentees;
- Welcomes and values the presence of all children in their lessons.

### **Head of Department**

- Examines the curriculum in order to develop ways of improving the quality of the classroom experience;
- Develops sensitive and effective departmental re-entry strategies which welcome children back from a period of absence and offers support in the organisation of missed work;
- Regularly liaises with Form Tutors and Heads of Year on attendance related matters.

### **Head of Year**

- Assumes a key role in co-ordinating all aspects of attendance related matters;
- Ensures that registers are properly maintained and that absences are appropriately followed up;
- Monitors and supervises the work of Form Tutors in promoting attendance;
- Effectively liaises with senior staff on attendance related matters;
- Ensures that up-to-date attendance data is regularly available;
- When necessary, communicates with and meets parents of children experiencing attendance difficulties;
- Refers attendance concerns to the Educational Welfare Officer;
- Considers attendance or punctuality concerns as part of CAF, PSP and other interventions;
- Consults, when appropriate, with other agencies - Social Care, CAMHS, etc.

### **Headteacher** (through the Senior Leadership Team)

- Ensures that a whole-school attendance policy is implemented and reviewed;
- Ensures that this policy is communicated to children, staff, parents and governors (via, for example, the school website);
- Ensures that detailed attendance data is regularly collected and used to inform strategic planning on attendance matters;
- Ensures that whole-school attendance targets are set and achieved;
- Reports to governors on attendance matters;
- Creates a school ethos which values and promotes excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

### **Responsibility for attendance matters at Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School:**

Mrs T Parker, Assistant Headteacher  
Miss A Welch, Attendance Officer  
SLT Year group link, Head of Year and Form tutors