



# Attendance policy



<b>Approved by:</b>	Aymeline Bel	<b>Date:</b> Autumn 2023
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## 1. Aims

1.1 We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

1.2 Context:

We also accept that attendance within the context of Queensmill must be considered within the context of autism and the corresponding challenges faced by our children, young people (CYP) and their families. The main barriers to consistent attendance are:

- › Complex needs link to autism: disrupted/ lack of sleep, additional mental health needs, sensory/ emotional regulation needs
- › Journey to school: around 80% of our CYP travel to school on transport led by the Local Authority (shared buses). Due to our CYP's complex needs, this arrangement can often break down or be disrupted.
- › Family background and own mental health
- › Lack of support from external professionals
- › Siblings with additional needs

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › 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

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Neeta Singh and can be contacted via 020 8740 8112 or [neeta.singh@thequeensmilltrust.com](mailto:neeta.singh@thequeensmilltrust.com)

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)/ Will check the attendance register for each class on a daily basis (by 11am) and will call parents of pupils who are absent and no reason has been provided.
- › Notify the relevant phase leader of any absence which are not justified (after the one phone call)
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with the school's family support practitioner, therapy team and phase leaders to tackle low and persistent absence

The attendance officer is Roxanne Francis and can be contacted via 020 8740 8112  
[roxanne.francis@thequeensmilltrust.com](mailto:roxanne.francis@thequeensmilltrust.com)

### **3.5 Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9:30am in the morning at 1:30pm in the afternoon.

### **3.6: Phase Leaders:**

Phase leaders are responsible to follow up with parents when their child's absence has not been explained and if the attendance officer has not reached parents (by the end of the day).

They should collaborate with family support/ therapies and the rest of the leadership teams when and as needed for specific supports to be implemented (e.g. OT assistant to support a bus journey, family support practitioner and OT to implement sleep routine in the home...)

### 3.7 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- › Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls from parents to the phase leader and/ or senior leader responsible for attendance in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### 3.8 Family support and Therapies team:

Occupational Therapists, Therapy Assistants and Family Support Practitioners are involved with supporting CYP and their families to improve attendance, offer early help to those at risk of low attendance and provide intervention to those with persistent absence. Class teachers, parents/carers, phase leaders and/or the attendance officer will refer individual CYP and their families to the Therapies and Family Support team for support in this area.

### 3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- › Consult with GP regarding child feeling unwell
- › Keep their children at home if they are sick for any of the following reasons
  - Contagious illness – duration dependent on illness
  - Diarrhea and vomiting illness – 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhea or vomiting
- › Report any difficulty on transport

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and in the middle of each school day. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- › Present
- › Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- › Absent
- › Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- › The original entry

- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment
- › The date on which the amendment was made
- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9:00 on each school day.

The register for the first half of the day will be taken at 9:00 and will be kept open until 9:30. The register for the second half of the day will be taken at 12:30 and will be kept open until 1:30.

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff at 020 870 8112 (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

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. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents/carers should inform the class teacher and call the school office to inform them of the appointment as far in advanced as possible.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

## 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- › The attendance officer 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 pupil's emergency contacts, the

attendance officer will inform the designated senior leader for attendance who will then assess whether the school needs to inform the local authority.

- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- › 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 will consider involving an education welfare office

#### 4.6 Following up unexplained absence – independent travelers

Where a pupil travels to school independently and does not arrive at the expected time

- › The class teacher will call the pupil's parent/carer to seek an update. If the school cannot reach the parent/carer, or any of the emergency contacts, the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated safeguarding lead will be informed.

#### 4.7 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels during parents evening and the annual review meeting. If there is a particular concern about a child's attendance, parents will be informed as early on as possible and a meeting will be arranged.

### 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is possible before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- › Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- › Holidays: due to our CYP complex needs, families can only travel at quieter times.

#### 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- › The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- › One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

As a school, we promote attendance supporting parents overcoming the barriers faced due to their very unique situation (e.g. having an autistic child). See below examples of those supports:

- › Parent workshops focused on supporting with routines and sleep
- › Individualised sleep assessment and plans
- › Advice, strategies and modelling in the home setting
- › Home visits to work with child at home
- › Support with journey to school
- › Transport assessments
- › Training, advice and resource provision for transport staff
- › Referrals to and liaison with external services -
- › Advice and resources to support with transition to/from holiday periods
- › Liaison with transport team and siblings' schools

Senior leaders, phase leaders, class teachers and teams, therapists, and family support deliver on the different supports outlined above. In most cases, a multi-disciplinary approach will be taken in order to achieve the best outcome for the child experiencing any barriers which is impacting their attendance.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

School attendance is monitored by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance using the internal attendance monitoring document. Data and information from the document are shared twice per term with senior leaders. A student struggling with attendance will be allocated a lead senior person to support, usually the phase leader. The senior person will work with other professionals, as well as the family, to develop specific strategies to support the student.

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Some students may have low attendance as in rare cases some students are on part-time attendance/ bespoke provision.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents 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
- › Regular meetings with attendance officers from individual Local Authorities.
- › Bespoke supports tailored to each CYP addressing barriers to attendance. Those plans will be designed by Phase leaders, Therapists, family support, Class Teachers and parents. The effectiveness of those supports will be monitored by

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the head teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour policy



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
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