



QUEENS' SCHOOL

Dare to be Great

Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

Queens' School recognises the strong link between attainment and attendance and the important role parents play in ensuring that it is as high as possible. A student's progress is severely hampered if they do not regularly attend school. To illustrate:

- 90% attendance is an average of one day out of school per fortnight over a school year.
- 90% attendance over 5 years at secondary school is 1/2 a school year missed.
- 80% attendance over 5 years at secondary school is the same as one whole school year missed.

Queens' School: Attendance Definitions	
97-100%	Expected
95-96%	Satisfactory
90-94%	A cause for concern
Less than 90%	Persistent absence. A serious cause for concern
Less than 80%	Severely absent. A serious cause for concern.

It is clearly understood that there are exceptional circumstances when levels of attendance may fall below 97% or even 95% for reasons beyond the student and parents' control. That said, these are very rare exceptions rather than the rule.

Queens' School is committed to ensuring the best possible levels of attendance for individual children and the school as a whole. Underpinning this commitment is a belief that children will only be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them if they attend school regularly and punctually.

We believe that a child's chances of a successful future may be affected by not attending school regularly. They may not be able to keep up with school work and they miss out on the social side of school life. There is a proven link between academic attainment and good attendance. Setting good attendance and punctuality patterns from an early age helps children in their adult life.

2. Aims

The school aims to meet fully its obligations under the 1996 Education Act to ensure that children remain in full-time education for as long as they are of compulsory school age. The Act places a duty on parents to ensure that their children are "properly educated, either at school or otherwise". Parents commit an offence if their child does not attend regularly. Any absence is an offence, unless authorised by the school.

The school also works hard to ensure the regular attendance of pupils above compulsory school age, to whom this policy also applies.

Specifically, the school meets its obligations by aiming to:

- demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.
- develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and is an integral part of the school's ethos.
- work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

3. Punctuality

Students should aim to arrive at school by 8.25am. Students are required to register in form time or at assembly in the morning at 8.30 am (the start of the school day). Students must be present in form time/assembly or have an acceptable reason for absence. Students who arrive after registration ends (8.45) are required to sign in at the attendance office, stating their reason for lateness and their time of arrival.

An email to the Attendance Officer from a parent or carer is required for the authorisation of lateness caused by appointments or other circumstances known about in advance. Students who fail to arrive punctually without an acceptable reason will receive a 20 minute detention. Students who arrive more than half an hour late without good reason or who fail to sign in will be recorded as having an unauthorised lateness and this is considered as truancy. Additional sanctions may be imposed in line with the school behaviour policy and parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the circumstances.

Punctuality to lessons is also regarded as extremely important. Students who fail to arrive punctually without an acceptable reason will receive a 20 minute detention. Ongoing issues of poor punctuality will be referred to the Pastoral Team for further action and parents/carers will be notified.

4. Procedures for reporting absence

The school relies on effective communication with parents/carers to ensure that students attend regularly.

Parents/carers should notify the school on the first day of absence by telephoning the school Attendance Officer on 01923 478234 or emailing attendance@queens.herts.sch.uk. This should be done before 8.30 am **on each day** that a student is unable to attend school.

Parents/carers should not telephone the School Reception, the Student Support Manager or the Form Tutor regarding attendance matters as the Attendance Officer must be the first line of contact.

Parents/carers are discouraged from making medical / dental appointments within the school day unless this is absolutely necessary.

5. Authorisation of absences

Absences are classified as “authorised” or “unauthorised” and the responsibility for classifying rests with the school. The school will not authorise absences which it deems have been taken for trivial reasons or which are not supported by parents (eg. shopping trips, day trips or looking after siblings). This will result in disciplinary action and, if such absences are regular, a referral to the County Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) will be made and/or the school may decide to instigate Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) proceedings (see Appendix A).

Absences will be authorised when they are unavoidable (illness) or in situations where leave is granted by the school (such as for participation in a theatrical performance or a sporting event unconnected to the school). One day will be authorised for Religious observance. All other absences will be treated as unauthorised.

If a child is absent due to illness the school will always ask for medical evidence (GP note, letter) if the period of absence is more than 5 days. Where there is frequent absence due to illness the school may request that periods of absence that total less than 3 days are also supported by medical evidence. The responsibility for classifying absence as “authorised” or “unauthorised” rests with the school.

6. Leave of absence during term time

Leave of absence during term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers do not have a right to expect leave of absence **and no authorisation will be given for the purposes of a holiday.**

If parents/carers need to take a child out of school during term time, permission must be sought in advance in writing from the Headteacher. Leave will be refused unless ‘exceptional circumstances’ can be demonstrated. Even in such cases where ‘exceptional circumstances’ are shown leave of absence will be refused where the child has a poor attendance record or would be absent during an important stage of their education eg. exams. The school is not obliged to set work for a student to complete because of a leave of absence during term time.

If a child does not return to school within the authorised time-frame then this will be discussed with the Attendance Improvement Officer and it is likely that the matter will be taken further and the school may instigate Fixed Penalty Notice proceedings. A child’s place at school may be jeopardised by an extended period of absence if no satisfactory explanation is received.

7. Responsibilities of students

Students must attend school regularly and on time. They must also attend lessons punctually. After any period of absence it is the responsibility of the student to catch up with any work missed. This applies even if the absence is due to an approved school activity such as a sporting fixture or theatre trip.

8. Expectations of parents/carers

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at Queens' School are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school every day school is open.

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
- instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- informing the school on the first day of absence, by 8.30am at the latest.
- providing the school with an explanation for the absence.
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
- taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings.
- working in partnership with the school to resolve issues and help the school to understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- proactively engage with the support offered by school to prevent the need for more formal support.
- If formal support is needed, proactively engage with this support to prevent the need for any legal intervention.
- booking any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- treating staff with respect
- actively supporting the work of the school
- calling staff for help when they need it
- communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support

9. Strategies for promoting attendance

Individual students or form groups with excellent attendance records or greatly improved records will be recognised by the school. Certificates are awarded during House and School assemblies and letters are sent to parents/carers.

Attendance statistics are reviewed regularly and targets are set for individual students or for form groups where appropriate. Monthly statistics for each form group are published so that staff and students can monitor the achievement of their form. Individual students are not identified in these statistics.

The school works closely in partnership with parents/carers in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils. They are regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance via newsletters, the school prospectus and parents' evenings. Letters are written home where problems are identified and meetings with parents/carers are held to discuss strategies to improve attendance levels. If problems cannot be resolved in this way the school may decide to refer students to the Attendance Improvement Officer of the Local Education Authority and/or issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to parents/carers.

The school is sensitive to individual students' needs, recognising that there can be some serious personal issues resulting in poor school attendance. The Learning Support Department may become involved in re-integrating long-term absentees and a student's curriculum may be modified where appropriate. Staff liaise with feeder primary schools to identify potential problems upon transfer to secondary school.

10. Use of legal action

If a student fails to attend school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Improvement Officer and school fail to secure that student's return to regular attendance, the school reserves the right to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to the parents/carers. This would result in the parents/carers being issued with a fine. The issue of a Penalty Notice would require the payment of a fine of £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the fine within 21 days would result in the fine increasing to £120 (per parent) to be paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the fine would leave the parents/carers liable for prosecution. If the student's attendance continues to cause concern then the County Council will take further legal action.

11. Monitoring attendance

Students must attend the official registration periods twice a day and these attendance registers are legal documents. The school maintains them accurately and produces reports on request to parents/carers or to authorised outside agencies. An individual attendance report is sent to all parents/carers with the student's annual school report. Absence emails are kept during each academic year but this will be longer where a student's attendance is a cause for concern. Whole school registers are kept in a secure place for at least 3 years.

All teachers and support staff have a responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance. Students are registered during each lesson and teachers alert the Attendance Officer to any concerns that arise. Internal truancy (during lesson time) is taken very seriously and is dealt with by the Student Support Managers for each year group in line with the school behaviour for learning policy.

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Consistent procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality are followed by each Student Support Manager and the Director of Learning will become involved in situations where a student's attendance is referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer.

The Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for student wellbeing works closely with the school's Attendance Officer and the Attendance Improvement Officer and monitors the attendance levels of particular students causing concern. The Headteacher ensures that the DfE and the School Trustees are kept fully informed of the overall level of school attendance on a termly basis.

12. Working with The Local Authority

Queens' school works in partnership with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance. The Deputy Headteacher will meet with the link LAAO when required to discuss and improve attendance for all persistently absent or severely absent pupils. Action Plans will be developed for all persistently and severely absent pupils. The school may request support from the LAAO for advice and guidance with the implementation of these action plans. If parents do not proactively engage with support offered through the action plan, then formal intervention may be requested from the LAAO. If parents do not engage with formal support, the school may request statutory intervention from the Local Authority. Statutory intervention can include:

- Parenting Contract
- Fixed Penalty Notice application from school
- Parenting Order
- Education Supervision Order
- Prosecution

The school will notify the Local Authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly via a 10 Day Absence Form. **See guidance on HCC Grid for form –**

<https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/attendance-guidance-and-statutory-responsibilities>

As part of the framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers (Ofsted June 2015) local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school age children in their area who are not in receipt of full-time education and schools are similarly expected to maintain data on students of compulsory school age who are on their roll but attending on a part-time timetable.

The Local authority has published guidance for all maintained school, academies, free schools, studio schools, UTCs, ESCs and PSBs on the use of part-time timetables for pupils of compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday).

All schools are required to return information on children who are on part-time tables within five days of the pupil starting or ending a part-time timetable.

Follow guidance from HCC Grid when considering a part-time timetable - <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/attendance-part-time-students>

13. Children Missing Education (CME)

A child is missing from education if they are of compulsory school age (age 5-16), do not have a school place and no alternative education arrangements have been made for them. A child is not defined as missing from education if they have a school place but are not attending regularly, if they are being home educated or if they attend alternative provision such as a college or Education Support Centre. Some children, often the most vulnerable, are at greater risk of going missing from education.

These vulnerable groups include:

- looked after children
- children living in women's refuges
- young runaways
- children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation
- children with long term medical or emotional problems
- unaccompanied asylum seekers
- children of refugees or asylum seeking families
- children in new immigrant families not yet established in the UK
- children from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background

- children who are privately fostered
- young carers
- children from transient families
- teenage mothers
- young offenders
- children permanently excluded from school

Children missing from education are at greater risk of:

- physical harm
- sexual exploitation
- becoming involved in crime
- demonstrating anti-social behaviour
- abusing drugs and alcohol
- being illegally employed

It is vital therefore that the authority, schools and other agencies work closely together to help safeguard children who may be missing from education. Role of the Children Missing from Education Officer (CMEO)
The Children Missing Education Officer (CMEO) is part of Children’s Services Integrated Services for Learning team and is responsible for receiving all CME referrals. The CME Officer keeps a record of all children reported as missing from education. Children are tracked until they return to suitable education.

If the child is missing from education, the CME Officer will ensure the details are passed to the appropriate team to secure suitable education. All children missing from education will be monitored by the CME Officer until such time as suitable provision is made.

Referral process for children believed to be missing from education

The referral procedure for children believed to be missing from education should be followed by all Queens’ School staff if a child they believe to be missing from education comes to their attention. Anyone who believes a child may be missing from education should inform the Deputy Headteacher who will contact the CME Officer for advice on 01992 556867.

To make a referral to the CME Officer the Deputy Headteacher will use the appropriate referral form and send via post (or in the schools’ post) to the Children Missing Education Officer at:

Central Attendance and Employment Support Team
Hertfordshire County Council
Room 134
CHO 136
County Hall
Pegs Lane
Hertford
SG13 8DF

Further resources

Statutory guidance

- [School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures](#)
- [Children missing education](#)

- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education](#)
- [School exclusion](#)

Guidance and resources

[National statistics: Pupil absence in schools in England](#)

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Queens' School (Bushey) Ltd [Registered Number: 07650609]

APPENDIX A

Local Code of Conduct – Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence (Truancy)

Introduction

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers the police, designated Local Authority Officers and Headteachers and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence (truancy) of pupils of statutory school age.

The government requires Local Authorities to issue a Code of Conduct to which all parties involved must adhere. Penalty notices may be issued only in accordance with the terms of the Code of Conduct.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that:

- the powers are applied consistently and fairly
- duplicate notices are not issued
- issuing a notice does not conflict with proceedings proposed or being taken by the Local Authority under section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the penalty notice scheme.

The Law

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added sections 444A and 444B to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for that offence by paying a penalty. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set out the framework for the operation of the scheme.

All those defined as a parent under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 are considered to be parents for the purpose of these provisions.

As with prosecutions under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence in respect of each child.

Penalty notices apply to parents of children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at maintained schools, academies, Pupil Referral Units (Education Support Centres), City Technology Colleges, Studio Schools, UTCs and any other alternative education provision arranged under section 19 of The Education Act 1996.

Parents cannot be prosecuted for the offence for which the penalty notice was issued until after the final deadline for payment has passed and the penalty remains unpaid. Parents cannot be convicted of that offence if the penalty is paid in accordance with the notice.

The Local Authority will retain any revenue from penalty notices to cover the administration of the scheme and any legal actions arising from it.

Rationale

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for pupils registered at schools, academies or other maintained or alternative provision.

A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances of unauthorised absence where the school considers a parent is capable of securing their child's regular attendance. It may be particularly effective at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued

- Penalty notices may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
- The pupil must have at least **15 sessions** (half days) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term
- The school must have sent a formal warning to the parent
- The school/academy/police or Attendance Improvement Officer considers that issuing a penalty notice could avoid further absence
- Issuing a penalty notice does not conflict with any other legal action being taken
- A maximum of **two** separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent within any twelve month period
- Penalty notices will be issued for pupils of compulsory school age, up to the end of the spring term of year 11
- A penalty notice will not be issued in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority without the prior agreement of the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Attendance

Responsibilities of the Local Authority for issuing penalty notices

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority and may not be delegated. Schools, academies and the police may issue penalty notices if they wish to do so but any notices issued by them **must** comply with the Local Authority Code of Conduct and a copy of any penalty notice issued must be provided to the Local Authority.

In Hertfordshire all parties agree that the Integrated Service for Learning Attendance Teams administer the scheme and issue penalty notices on behalf of police, schools, academies and other settings to ensure fairness and consistency and in the event that subsequent legal action may need to be taken.

The Local Authority receives applications to issue penalty notices from schools, academies and the police. Penalty notices will be issued provided that:

- the circumstances of the absence meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct
- the information is provided in the specified manner
- the request is received not more than 10 school days after the final absence cited

The Local Authority retains revenue from the scheme to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices and prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Appealing against the issue of penalty notices

There is no statutory right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued. The Local Authority may withdraw a notice if it has been issued incorrectly. If the penalty notice has been issued in accordance with Hertfordshire's Code of Conduct there is no facility to overturn the decision to issue the notice.

Effect of issuing penalty notices

If the penalty is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it the Local Authority named in the notice shall either institute proceedings against the recipient for the offence or shall withdraw the notice.

Payment of penalty notices

The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.

Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.

Penalty notices are sent by first class post and are deemed to have been received on the second day after posting.

Arrangements for payment are detailed on the penalty notice and payment by cheque, postal order and by debit/credit card is accepted.

Withdrawal of penalty notices

The Local Authority may only withdraw penalty notices in circumstances where it determines that the notice:

- has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct
- ought not to have been issued
- ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient
- has not been paid but it is not appropriate to prosecute the recipient for the offence

Prosecution of unpaid penalty notices

If the notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority