Queen's Croft High School Attendance Policy

QUEEN'S CROFT
INSPIRING GREATNESS

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting **G R E A T** attendance (see 1.1) and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

1.1 What G R E A T attendance looks like at Queen's Croft School

- The staff at Queen's Croft school have high aspirations for all young people and students are expected to attend 100% of the time. Exceptions to this rule are if they feel too unwell, have unavoidable medical appointments or for exceptional circumstances agreed by the senior lead for attendance.
- Missing only a small number of days in education has a massive impact on a child's attainment. The table below highlights what each attendance percentage band looks like in missed learning.

Attendance Band	Missed Learning
98%-100% **G R E A T**	**4 days - 24 lessons**
95-97.9% **G R E A T**	**9 days - 2 weeks - 54 lessons**
92-94.9%	**15 days - 3 weeks - 90 lessons**
90%-91.9%	**19 days - 4 weeks - 114 lessons**
90% and below (**persistent absence**)	**29 days - 6 weeks - 174 lessons**

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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 (Student 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 monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Co-headteachers

The Co-headteachers via the senior leader for attendance is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The senior leader for attendance

The senior leader for attendance is responsible for:

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Holds formal meetings with parents/carers and other professionals
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Co-headteachers and governors
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advises the Co-headteachers when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

3.4 The inclusion and family support practitioner (attendance officer)

The school's inclusion and family support practitioner (attendance officer):

- Take calls and emails from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school system
- Contacts families should no reason be given for a child's absence
- Reports concerns about attendance to the senior leader for attendance and safeguarding.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues.
- Advises the school admin staff of attendance letters to be sent to parents/carers including half termly traffic light update letters which are sent to all parents/carers.
- Attends home visits including safe and well checks with another member of the Inclusion and Family support Team.

3.5 Pastoral Leads

The pastoral leads for KS3, KS4 and KS5 are responsible for

- Celebrating GREAT attendance in assemblies

- Organising rewards for GREAT attendance
- Holding pre-formal meetings with parents/carers following any informal meetings with class staff. An attendance improvement plan will be created during these meetings.

3.6 Class teacher and teaching assistants

Classroom staff are responsible for

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via SIMs.
- Rewarding GREAT attendance
- Notifying the inclusion and family support practitioner of any repeating patterns of absence noticed
- Holding informal meetings with parents/carers

3.7 School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff are expected to:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence and pass information to attendance officer
- Send out any other parent/carer communication as necessary

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and before the start of the afternoon sessions after lunch time. It will mark whether every student 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 initials of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

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

The morning register in school will be taken at 9:00 and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the afternoon session in school will be taken at 12:45pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.20am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/carers will phone the school office and give the reason for their child's absence. Parents/carers will make contact with the school every day for the period of absence.

If no contact is made by parents/carers the attendance officer will contact the family to find reasons for the absence.

If contact cannot be made a home visit may be necessary.

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 student'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 if the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

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

The student'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 student who arrives late:

- **9.00am - Lesson 1 begins from 9.00am onwards**
- **9.21am** - If a student arrives on or after this time they will be marked as being **LATE** to school, using the appropriate code. This will **impact on their punctuality records**.
- **9.30am** - If a student does not arrive by this time they will be marked as absent until the student arrives in school. **Late** will then be marked on the register, this will be after the register has closed and a reason will be given in the notes box. This will **impact on their attendance records**.
- Late due to circumstances out of the family's control such as taxi issues or unprecedented traffic situations will be marked on the register in the notes section.
- Patterns relating to late marks will be tracked and analysed. Action will be taken as appropriate and necessary.
- Any repeated reasons for lateness must be discussed and agreed with the senior lead for attendance. These will be noted and reviewed as necessary.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason initially by telephone. If contact cannot be made a home visit and a safe and well check may be necessary. This can be made by a member of the attendance team or a member of the inclusion and family support team.

- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Attendance will be reported to parents/carers half termly via a letter sent by email.

Attendance will also be reported to parents/carers annually within the written end of year report.

Attendance levels may be reported more frequently on an adhoc basis if attendance is causing concern.

The Education Welfare officer (EWO) will be alerted to any attendance causing concern and may contact parents/carers directly.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The co-headteachers will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the co-headteacher's discretion.

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

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 student's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travelers, 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 student is attending educational provision.
- Family bereavement.
- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed
- 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as "*a situation or circumstance where the pupil's absence cannot be clearly defined using another register code, or where there are limited controls or ability to allow the pupil to attend.*"

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, a leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks/1 month before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the Head of School. The co-headteachers may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

The persistent absence threshold is **below 90% attendance**. If a student's individual overall attendance rate is less than or equal to **90%**, the student will be classified as a **persistent absentee**.

Persistent absence will be monitored closely. This will take the form of in school monitoring of registers and attendance data. A notification letter will be sent to parents/carers once a student has been identified as being persistently absent, this will be supplemented with phone conversations and a meeting with class staff in the first instance. Should a child's attendance not improve over an agreed time period, a meeting to set attendance targets will be held with the child's keystage pastoral lead. A home visit may be necessary. The EWO will be informed of all persistent absentees.

A warning/legal challenge letter may be sent to parents/carers should attendance not improve. This may be accompanied by a full review of absence letter and a formal meeting will be held with the senior lead for attendance and senior lead for safeguarding. There may be use of an emergency annual review and / or a wider professionals meeting.

Full links with the SENCO and DSL are ensured once students are identified as being persistent absentees. Possible outcomes following DSL or EWO involvement may be referral to Early Help, an early annual review, reassessment of the EHCP, social services assessment or health care referral.

Further support may be sought through the SEND team or Social Care.

5.3 Interim part-time timetables

In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for an **interim part-time timetable** to meet a student's individual needs. For example where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will usually last for two weeks before being reviewed. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, Queen's Croft school has agreed to a student being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will record it as authorised absence (see 5.1 approval for term-time absence).

Queen's Croft school will work in collaboration the Local Authority of any part-time education arrangements. These students are seen as children at risk of missing out on education, and therefore require monitoring.

For the purposes of this document the definition of a child **at risk of** missing out on education is a child registered at a school but not receiving full time education as part of a planned approach by the school.

5.4 Legal sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 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 the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Queen's Croft School promotes attendance through a number of means, some are proactive while others are responses to new issues. All contribute to whole school, Key stage, class and individual's attendance rates.

Those with the most improved attendance will be rewarded termly by an appropriately selected reward with the co-headteachers.

A class attendance league will exemplify the class with the highest levels of attendance each week. The class(es) who have the highest attendance levels at the end of each term will receive a class reward.

Special mentions for improving attendance will be made in Key Stage assemblies as appropriate.

Students achieving 100% attendance or those with most improved attendance over the whole academic year will receive an award during the end of year celebration event.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors student absence on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

A student's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

Students parent/carers are expected to phone school every day that a student is absent, with the exception of when a fixed term period of absence is required for example 48 hours for sickness or diarrhoea. Contact must be made with school to inform them of the reason and length of absence. If a student is off school for more than 48 hours, contact will be made with the family at least twice a week until the student returns to school. Individual circumstances may require more frequent contact.

If a student's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this and possibly carry out a home visit or inform relevant agencies.

If a student's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer. There may be use of an emergency annual review and / or a wider professionals meeting.

The **persistent absence** threshold is **below 90% attendance**. If a student's individual overall attendance rate is below than or equal to 90%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

The **severe absence** threshold is **below 50% attendance**. If a student's individual overall attendance rate is below than or equal to 50%, the student will be classified as a severe absentee.

Student-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.

Attendance will be tracked and monitored using SIMs. Attendance concerns will be recorded on My Concern.

Fortnightly attendance monitoring meetings will take place to discuss and identify any long-term concerns. A vulnerability traffic light rating will be used to identify vulnerable students and to inform discussions with the EWO.

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance or absent due to mental or physical ill health or returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Queen's Croft School is aware that there are often extenuating circumstances relating to children and young People with SEND that may influence attendance positively and negatively.

Queen's Croft is also aware that minor changes in students' lives, transport arrangements, domestic situations, class groupings, peer relationships, medication changes, care placements and services involvement may significantly influence their emotional and mental health. This must be considered in actions taken relating to attendance.

Each student's attendance and SEND related difficulties will be treated on an individual basis according to need but will always be equitable and fair. Students of concern are clearly identified, and their attendance monitored. Strategies put in place are recorded and reviewed.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the co-headteachers. 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
- Positive behaviour policy

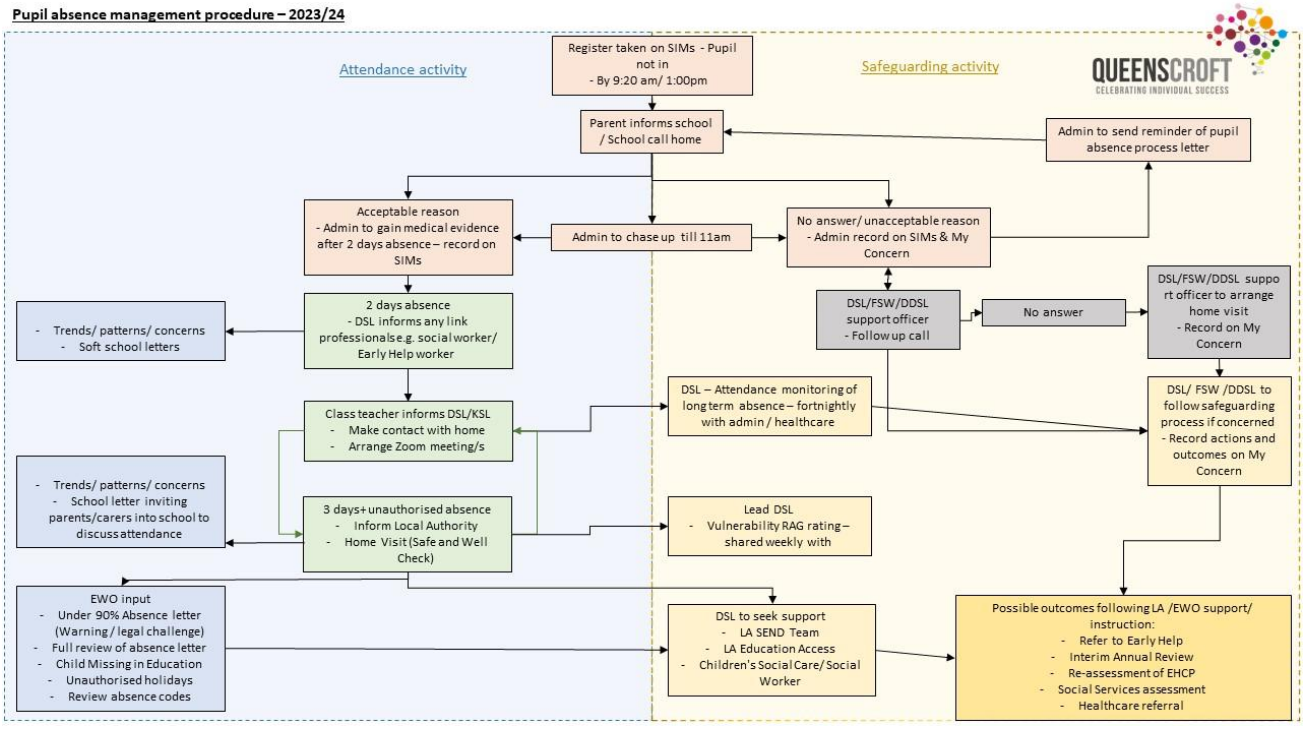
Appendix 1: attendance codes

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)

E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school

N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

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