



Queen's Croft High School

Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

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

- Promoting good attendance 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 to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending 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 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 students
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Form group teachers

Form group teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School Office Staff

School Office Staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

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 once during the second session. 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 name and position 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 9.15am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.05pm and will be kept open until 1.20pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

You can contact the school office on 01543 227245 or email office@queenscroft.staffs.sch.uk

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

A copy of the appointment letter should be sent prior to the appointment to the school office at office@queenscroft.staffs.sch.uk

However, 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:

- 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

Ongoing punctuality issues will be identified by form tutors and reported to the Attendance Officer and Senior leadership team. The attendance officer then will make a phone call home to look into avenues of support to improve punctuality.

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, by the attendance officer.
- 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

Individual attendance figures are shared with parents during the annual review process for Education, Health and Care Plans, Mid-year reports and End of year reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher 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 headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as those circumstances which are temporary and involve an extraordinary event. Examples of such are as follows but the list is not exhaustive.

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

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 belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ 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 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 student is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

The reason for absence must be established in the first instance. If a parent/carer has not contacted school via telephone or email by 9.15am on the first day of absence, then the attendance officer will call home to establish the reason for the absence and when the individual is expected to return to school.

All students with a percentage attendance of below 90% will be identified in each Key Stage. Key stage leaders will meet with form tutors to look at reasons for absence and whether patterns of absence are emerging. This information will be recorded and shared with the attendance officer and senior leadership team. The key stage lead will liaise with the Attendance Officer and will send an email/letter to advise parents/carers of the impact that attendance can have on student progress.

If absence and/or patterns of absence continue to fall the Attendance Officer will make a call home to see if there is anything school can do to support any barriers to attendance.

If absence and/or patterns of absence persist, then the Key Stage Lead will refer students to the Intervention’s Team which includes the school attendance officer and DSL. The team will look at the individual student profile to see what support is currently in place and what can be accessed to support the student and their family. The attendance officer will contact parents/carers to discuss these options further.

At this stage, continued persistent absence and/or patterns of absence and lack of parental/carer engagement will be discussed by the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Senior Leadership Team. A formal letter will be sent home to discuss concerns and potential actions relating to continued absence and parental/carer lack of engagement.

A formal meeting with parents/carers and other professionals involved (for example, Social Care, Early Help Team, Family Support Team, Education Welfare Officer) will be held to develop an action plan to support the improvement of persistent absence and/or patterns of absence. If no outside agencies are currently involved, then school will offer support to make appropriate referrals.

Lack of engagement from parents/carers at this stage will require school to make a referral for additional services and support without consent. Parents/carers will be made aware of the referral and that at this point legal sanctions will be considered by the Headteacher.

5.3 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
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

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

- Supporting families and identifying help where appropriate
- Ensuring that when students are in school that their needs are met through the use of Student Profiles and reflective practice to ensure high quality teaching and interactions.
- Working with partner agencies in health and social care.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors student absence on a daily 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).

If a student's absence goes above 3 consecutive days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this.

If a student's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Intervention Team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent 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.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by the Headteacher and, 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)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

N	Reason not provided	Student 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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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 student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day