



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy adopted by Governing Body 28th September 2023 to be revised in 2024.

Principles

Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School is maximised and that rates of unexplained and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

Responsibilities

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should familiarise themselves with this Attendance Policy and should work closely with school staff to overcome any problems which may affect a student's attendance.

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School aims to encourage and assist all students to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. **Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School's attendance target is 95% attendance.**

The school recognises the external factors which influence student attendance and will work in partnership with parents, the School Liaison Officer and other relevant services to deal with any issues. The school will take a proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance by defining expectations with students and their parents and will provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal procedures.

Procedures

Registration

Registration is carried out at 8:45 and 13:50 (8:45 and 13:30 on Thursdays). Registers will be marked promptly at these times and will be closed at 8:55 and 13:55 (8:55 and 13:35 on Thursdays). Should a student arrive after the registers have closed they will be marked as late for that session.

Registers should be marked in accordance with the school's guidelines using Student Absentees in Arbor. Additionally, staff are expected to register during every lesson, also using Arbor.

Students who are late should sign in at the school office where their late mark will be placed in Arbor with the reason for their lateness.

Absences

All absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Should the school not receive an explanation for an absence or should the explanation be deemed unsatisfactory then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

The school will decide whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. **Parents are asked to either telephone the school office or inform the school of an absence by** using the email address absence@queenelizabeths.kent.sch.uk. An electronic note will be placed on the school attendance system (Arbor) for the Form Tutor to see. When absence requests are handed in via students, Form Tutors should initial and date the note and send it to the Attendance Officer who will amend the electronic register accordingly.

Children Absent from Education

The safeguarding risks for children repeatedly absent from school are clear, including those absent on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods. There is an increased risk of such students becoming students missing from education in the future. The DSL in conjunction with the Learning Manager will oversee the response to students in this category, ensuring the school keeps track of students who are absent from school by taking daily attendance registers. The Attendance Officer will be also be in regular contact with the School Liaison Officer and Heads of Year. A referral will be made to the Local Authority via the 'Digital Front Door' on the 'Kelsi' website, for students who are repeatedly absent from school and where the school has not received parental correspondence.

Lateness

Students who arrive at school after morning or afternoon registration should sign in at the main school office, where a member of the office will enter the time of arrival and the reason for the student's lateness in the Signing In/Out sheet. This is important for Health and Safety reasons. The Attendance Officer along with the Learning Managers will monitor lateness. If a student arrives after 9:30am, the parent is required to either bring a letter, email absence@queenelizabeths.kent.sch.uk or telephone the school to explain the lateness.

Where we have not heard from parents in advance, students who arrive late in Years 7-11 will receive a behaviour point. They receive a detention following 5 behaviour points.

Absence Calling

If a student is absent from morning registration and this has not been explained in advance or before 09:30, the school will call parents using the contact details in Arbor.

Extended Absence

In the case of an ongoing absence (e.g. sickness lasting more than one day) responsibility rests with parents or guardians to keep the school fully informed **each day** the student is absent from school.

The Attendance Officer will issue a weekly report for Heads of Year to show any unexplained absences for each registration group. A letter will be sent home to parents regarding absences for which no explanation has been received.

Illness at School

If a student feels ill at school they should inform their teacher or go to the school office to report the illness, where a first aider will tend to them. If a student needs to be sent home, parents or guardians will be called to come and collect the student. We will not allow students in year 7 - year 9 to make their way home unaccompanied.

Term-Time Holidays

The attendance regulations state that from 2013, Headteachers were no longer able to grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays. This means that we are not able to authorise any holiday requests and that any holiday taken will be marked as unauthorised absence.

Leave of Absence

If a parent would like to make a request for a leave of absence of up to one day, they must apply in writing to the Form Tutor, or by email to absence@queenelizabeths.kent.sch.uk

Requests for leave of absence for more than one day should be referred to the Headteacher or, in his absence, the Deputy Headteacher, through the Attendance Officer.

The school will decide whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.

Arrangements for any study leave for students in years 9 - 13 will be published by the Headteacher or a delegated representative. Individual leave of absence requests are not required.

Truancy

The procedures for registration and parental notification of a student's absence mean that the truancy rate in school is very low. However, any member of staff who suspects that a student is absent from school without authorisation must report this suspicion to the appropriate Form Tutor, Attendance Officer or Learning Manager as soon as possible, who in turn should report it to a member of the Leadership Group.

All members of staff must also be vigilant to ensure that students are not absenting themselves from individual lessons by doing occasional checks of absentees against the attendance register and notifying the appropriate Form Tutor or Learning Manager of any such absences. They in turn should report it to the appropriate Key Stage Manager.

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.

Rights, Responsibilities and Roles

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School encourages good attendance and will investigate all unexplained and unauthorised absence.

Students

Students will:

- ensure that they attend school regularly and on time
- attend all lessons punctually
- not leave the school without permission
- have all individual records of attendance acknowledged by the school

Parents

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance and:

- are responsible for immediately informing school of the reason for any absence by phone call or email to absence@queenelizabeths.kent.sch.uk on each morning of absence
- are responsible for ensuring their child arrives in school if they are coming in later during the day for any reason, such as a medical appointment
- should check their child's attendance through 'Arbor'
- will not arrange family holidays during term time
- can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance record

Staff Roles

The Form Tutor

At Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School the Form Tutor is seen as a key figure in promoting regular punctual attendance. The tutor should:

- provide a good example by always being punctual to registration
- carry out registration in the prescribed manner, marking a student as absent, present or late
- ensure that all notes from parents are checked and initialled before passing them to the Attendance Officer
- use the tutor/student interview to discuss attendance and/or punctuality issues, setting and monitoring targets as appropriate
- offer praise to individual students whose attendance and/or punctuality improves

The Subject Teacher

Subject teachers should:

- take a register at the beginning of every lesson (and ensure that the students know that a register is being taken)
- follow up any suspected internal truancy by checking with the Attendance Officer or Learning Manager immediately

The Learning Manager

Learning Managers are responsible for monitoring the attendance of their year group. They should:

- monitor attendance on a regular basis, setting targets for improvement as appropriate
- monitor the performance of individual tutor groups, following up with individual tutors instances where patterns of absenteeism are not being effectively addressed
- regularly put attendance onto the agenda of Pastoral Meetings
- ensure that contact is made with parents of poor attenders, supporting the tutor where appropriate in dealing with parents directly
- follow up internal truancy with appropriate punishments
- promptly deal with issues which may cause a student to experience attendance difficulties
- promote good attendance and punctuality through assemblies, commendations, rewards, etc

The Attendance Officer

At Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School the Attendance Officer is responsible for the data entry and monitoring of attendance and should:

- monitor attendance on a regular basis, setting targets for improvement as appropriate
- ensure the correct attendance codes are entered
- send a report to Form Tutors should a student return to school after an absence without a written explanation from his or her parent and is not forthcoming after 5 school days
- send letters to parents should a student return to school after an absence without a written explanation from his or her parent and is not forthcoming after 10 school days
- ensure that contact is made with parents of poor attenders
- contact the parents of students whose absence falls under 85% to advise that absence will no longer be authorised without medical evidence

- maintain regular contact with the School Liaison Officer to discuss, identify and support those students whose attendance are a source of concern
- collect, analyse and assess the following data every month:
 - whole school attendance rates
 - numbers and proportion of persistent absentee students (under 85%)
 - rates of unauthorised absence
 - attendance rates for particular cohorts and groups (year groups, SEN, etc)
- liaise with Learning Managers and other relevant staff in order to identify trends and patterns and to link attendance with attainment

Communication

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School Attendance Policy will be communicated through:

- information on the website
- Arbor – the school parent communication gateway
- the home-school agreement
- guidance and advice in the staff handbook

Signed _____ (*Chair of Governors*)

Date