



Queen Margaret Primary School

Attendance Policy

Background

The law says that:

- Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their children receive suitable full time education;
- That Local Authorities must ensure that parents fulfil their legal obligations regarding their children's education;
- Maintained schools must allow the LA to inspect their registers
- Schools must report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly. Gloucestershire's Penalty Notice protocol allows schools to notify the LA of any pupil having more than 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence in a ten week period particularly when this absence is on account of:

(a) Lateness after registration at 9.15am;

(b) Term time holidays without permission/authorised

In these instances the LA will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice of £60 per parent/carers per child. Unauthorised absence may lead to the LA taking full court action if attendance issues cannot be resolved.

A written warning will no longer be issued, in the first instance, by the school.

Formal meetings (Attendance Improvement Meetings) will be held with parents whose children's poor attendance may lead to legal proceedings and attendance plans will be drawn up.

Aims and objectives

At Queen Margaret Primary School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

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. At Queen Margaret Primary School, we expect pupils to attend every day that the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the school is given and we are able to authorise the absence.

Roles and responsibilities

Report on attendance figures when required

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before (*insert time your register closes*) 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 one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

The governing body/academy trust board are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- management and improvement across schools

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
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader Mrs Bennion is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

The school attendance officer Ms K Watts is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- 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 school staff eg pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The class teacher/form tutor is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office. Registration closes at 9am in school and pupils who arrive after 9am will be marked as late until 9.15am when after this time will be given an authorised late registration mark.

School administration/office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents.

Authorised absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by *9.00am* or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

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.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (9.15am), using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent after (9.15am), using the appropriate code

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.

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 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.

In accordance with the [DfE School Attendance – Main Guidance](#), the school will record pupils as code Y 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by the academy or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's ['Home to school travel and transport'](#) guidance document or ask the academy for a printed copy.)
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending the academy.
- The pupil is in custody, but still on the academy's roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities, those sessions can be as 'present at approved educational activity').

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least 5 weeks in advance before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible here within the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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.

Procedure following unexplained absence

- 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 school may decide to complete a welfare visit to the property to ensure the child is well.
- 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 arrange for an AIM Plan to be implemented and an Attendance Contract which has agreement from all parties in agreeing to regular attendance.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Explain how your school is promoting, incentivising and celebrating good attendance eg assemblies, school meetings with parents, displays, transition meetings, rehearsing daily routines

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels each day, this is also sent via text message each Friday with daily updated figures of the pupil's attendance.
- Monitor attendance and absence data, this is completed on a daily basis and notifications are sent to parents of pupils whose attendance has dropped below 90% each Friday this happens across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether 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.

- 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
- Provide regular attendance reports to the Headteacher and Governors including persistent absentees. Our SENCo helps with facilitating 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

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.

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
- Provide outside agencies to be involved
- Onsite Pastoral Support Worker
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance and Inclusion Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Procedures for unauthorised absences (Holidays/Long Term absences)

A fine may be issued per parent, per child, if unauthorised holiday of any duration is taken, and this may be issued without further warning. If parents are separated, a fine can be issued to each parent or carer even if they are not responsible for taking the child on holiday. The fine will be £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority will consider proceedings in the Magistrate's Court which could lead to a fine of up to £2500 or a period of up to 3 months imprisonment. The school will apply for a penalty notice for every unauthorised holiday which meets the local authority protocol.

For the purposes of education law, the department of education considers a 'parent' to include: all biological parents, whether they are married or not; any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person This policy should be read in conjunction with our other safeguarding policies. an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative; any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

Other penalty notices:

- A penalty notice may be issued where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours on a school day.
- A penalty notice may be issued for persistent lateness of a pupil arriving at school after the registers have closed (recorded as Code U on the school attendance register). The school should issue a letter to parents

warning that if there is a further unauthorised absence within fifteen school days, a penalty notice may be issued.

Further information is available at : [Attendance - Schoolsnet \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/attendance-schoolsnet)

Where attendance is less than 80% an Attendance Improvement Meeting will be instigated unless there is significant involvement from outside agencies.

Sanctions / Penalty Notices

If the school requests Gloucestershire County Council to issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Attendance - Schoolsnet \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/attendance-schoolsnet)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice **each parent** must pay £60 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £120 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All-natural parents, whether they are married or not

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil

Any person who has care of a child or pupil ie lives with and looks after the child

Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy ↗

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is update, as a minimum 12 monthly review and at every review the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

Children Missing Education (see also Child Protection/ Safeguarding)

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information, and cannot contact you, your child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. (See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy) This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child. By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

Alternative Provision

The school is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Where this is the case, the school will have reciprocal arrangements in place with the alternative provider, to provide attendance information. Where possible, this should be provided daily, at the least weekly. All unexplained and unexpected absences are to be followed up in a timely manner.

Pupils may be present at an off-site activity which has been approved by the school. The appropriate code (B) is used in such cases and in using this code the academy is certifying the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard children. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work.

A pupil may be dual registered at more than one school. Where this is the case, the appropriate code (D) is used to indicate the pupil was not expected to attend the session as they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school or otherwise of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

Prepared by: Sara Bennion



Approved by: Full Governing Body December 2023

Co-Chairs – Joy Pegg

Emily Bytheway

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Review due: December 2024 or before as appropriate