



Policy:	Attendance Policy
Owner:	Mrs Kirsty Cleworth
Approving Board:	Academy Committee
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Our school

Queen Katharine Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils/students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based upon the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

Everyone – including students, parents and carers, all school staff, school governors, Local Authority, external agencies – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. We are committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies to achieve best outcomes for children via the early help pathways available.

We believe that ours is a successful, welcoming school which you and your children play an important part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of our school community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open (Isle of Wight V Platt) unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.

All staff (teaching and support) at our school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Regular attendance is so important as it gives your child the best opportunity to learn. Any absences will affect the pattern of your child's schooling and consistent absences may seriously affect their learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines, not only for your child but for others in the same class.

The Academy liaises closely with our Local Authority and other agencies using an Early Help pathway (Early Help Referral) which assists in the assessment of need in order for appropriate support to be given. This initial pathway enables further referrals to external agencies to be made and further support acquired to support families to remove any barriers that are preventing regular attendance.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Definition of a parent/carer in Education Law

It's important that schools and local authorities are aware that parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

For the purposes of education law, the department 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 could be 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

The Law relating to attendance and the right to a full-time education

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs, he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

It is the legal responsibility of **every** parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an **additional legal duty** to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of agreed circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case (2017) considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are determined by the school and are the days and hours that they are open for pupils to attend. Under this judgment all children registered at a school should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Law relating to Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is **everyone's responsibility** and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses: -

Attendance	Anti-Bullying
Behaviour Management	Access to the Curriculum
Health and Safety	Wellbeing

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. Creating and maintaining a pattern of punctual and regular attendance is **everybody's** responsibility – parents/carers, pupils, school staff and, external agencies.

Expectations and Daily routines

Our school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect all children to be in their Tutor Group by this time, so they need to arrive in school by **8.40am**. Registers are marked at **8.45am** and close at **9.15am**.

Your child will receive an unauthorised late mark if they arrive after the register has closed. Your child will be given a 'U' code (unauthorised late) in line with regulations, and this may mean that you face legal action if they persist.

When your child is late, they miss the start of the day, they can miss work, and this will impact on their learning. Late arrivals also disrupt lessons for other pupils in the class, which is not fair on them or your child.

Absence Procedure

If your child is going to be absent from school, you must contact the Academy on the first day and every subsequent day of absence and inform us of the reason for the absence (unless it is a diagnosed medical condition, and we already have evidence on their file). You can do this by:

- Phoning the Academy on **01733 383888** and either speak to a member of staff or leave a message on the absent student line.
- Calling into the Academy and speaking to a staff member

If your child is absent and you do not contact us, we may, under our safeguarding policy:

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day and every following day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Contact emergency numbers held on our database
- Undertake a home visit if no contact is received from you or Invite you in to discuss the situation with us
- Call 101 (Police) and request a safe and well check if all other attempts to contact you fail to get a response
- Invite you to discuss the absences with us
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of a Penalty Notice Fine issued to each parent/carer for each child or legal action through the courts.

Who to contact if you or your child have questions or concerns about attendance?

- Your child's Tutor or Progress Team
- More detailed support – speak to the Academy Attendance Manager. You can contact the school office by telephone 01733 383888 or email us on info@qka.education and a call back or appointment will be organised for you.

Data and Monitoring

How we monitor attendance/absence

We keep track all our children's attendance and absences thoroughly through regular reports from our Management Information System. We look at the reports on a regular basis to track any concerns that may arise due to unauthorised absences and to ensure that any interventions are timely and appropriate.

We routinely monitor attendance and absences to assist the Academy in providing the correct support to families where necessary.

We analyse all patterns of absence, both authorised and unauthorised* and try to ensure that parents/carers are informed of any child's attendance that fails below the National Average to prevent your child becoming a persistent absentee (PA) which means that they have an attendance below 90%. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parent/carer support and co-operation to tackle this.

Our interventions at this stage may include, but are not limited to:

- writing to parents/carers if attendance drops below the school's threshold of 95%.
- requesting that they provide evidence to support absences
- calling a School Attendance Meeting
- making an Early Help Referral
- referring to the Local Authority for support

PA pupils are also tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

***Understanding types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is essential, preferably in writing so that it can be recorded correctly.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an exceptional circumstance such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other exceptional cause authorised by the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. These include, but are not limited to:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, acting as interpreters or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional circumstance
- medical treatment overseas (unless part of emergency treatment whilst abroad on an authorised absence).

This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council, School Attendance Team, using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is **never** an option to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Impact analysis

As part of our data analysis and monitoring process we will regularly assess the outcomes of our support/interventions to measure the impact that they are having on the improvement of children's attendance and attainment.

We will continue to meet with and engage with families to find out and help resolve any barriers to regular attendance, including signposting or referring to other agencies.

We will regularly review cases to ensure that the school is providing the appropriate support. Referrals for legal action is a last resort, but sometimes cannot be avoided.

Legal Interventions

The important legal information – New from August 19th 2024

The Government have introduced a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England. This threshold is **10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years. In line with national guidance, the Local Authority (LA) retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents have taken several term time holidays below the national threshold. The LA also retains the discretion to consider going straight to prosecution where appropriate.

A maximum of 2 penalty notices per parent, per child can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. This period will start from the issue of the 1st penalty notice. The national framework also sets out the escalation process which applies to such penalty notices. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, another tool should be used. In Peterborough, where a pupil's attendance has met the national threshold for a third time within 3 years and the parent/s have already been issued with 2 penalty notices within that period, consideration will be given to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which can result in a criminal conviction and fine of up to £2,500.

A parent includes any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent/s with day-to-day responsibility for the child's attendance or the parent/s who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £160 to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice, the second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first offence, is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days.

There is no reduced sum available in this instance.

Part payments or payment plans are not acceptable, and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

Leave of absence/single absence event/Holidays

As a school we ask parents/carers **not** to take children out of school without the permission of the headteacher as per the Law and Legislation. Please remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Headteacher's must comply with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance (*with at least four weeks' notice*). In deciding whether to authorise the leave the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually taking into account the evidence submitted in support. If the request is refused the Headteacher will inform all parties of their decision. If the Headteacher grants the request it is for the Headteacher to **determine** the length of time the pupil can be away from school.

Where a leave of absence request states it is 'for the purpose of religious observance' Queen Katharine Academy will follow the guidance from Peterborough City Council. As a rule, only one individual day, exclusively set aside by a religious body will be accepted as a religious observance absence. Evidence from the religious body may be required.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website

Escalation of Procedures

When we escalate cases to higher level legal interventions

The school will make every effort to support families/children whose attendance is causing concern. However, there are some circumstances where despite every effort from the Academy, the Local Authority and extended work through multiple agencies this has failed to improve the attendance. At this point the school may instigate, or request that the Local Authority instigates a more formal legal intervention.

If this occurs a case may be prepared and presented to the Magistrates Court for prosecution under Section 444 (1) or 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996.

The outcome of these cases will be determined by the courts, of which can be:

- where convicted under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, you may be fined up to £1,000.
- where convicted under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.
- Impose a Parenting Order

Incentives and Rewards

How our school is **promoting** and incentivising good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Having a whole school approach to attendance
- Provide details on attendance in our regular newsletters
- Report to you regularly on how your child/children are performing in school, what their attendance

and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress

- Update you at parent/carer evenings'
- Celebrate and reward good and improving attendance through weekly, half term and term events. Through assemblies and displays throughout the school.

Our monitoring/intervention strategy

may be impacting on regular attendance. We try to take a holistic approach to dealing with and resolving barriers to non-school attendance and use legal interventions as a last resort.

Expectations of academy trust boards and/or governing bodies

Our academy trust board and governing body will have high expectations for attendance at our school.

It is their role to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure that our school leaders fulfil their expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge and help to focus our improvement efforts where needed most
- Ensure all our school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

References

The Education Act 1996, 2002 & 2011

Working together to improve school attendance (Guidance) May 2022

Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2018,

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, 2011, 2013 & 2016

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, 2012 & 2013

Children Act 1989 & 2004

People with overall attendance responsibility in our school

Designated Senior Leader

Attendance Champion: Mr Stuart Wall Tel: 01733 383888 Email: stuart.wall@qka.education

Attendance Manager: Mrs Sue De Matteis Tel: 01733 383888 Email: sue.dematteis@qka.education

Attendance Officer: Mrs Jo White Tel: 01733 383888 Email: jo.white@qka.education

Date of Policy:

Date of Review:

Declaration of acceptance by parents/carers.

I/We have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at **Queen Katharine Academy**.

Full Name of parent/carer (PRINT) _____

Signed Parent/carer 1:

Date:

Full Name of parent/carer (PRINT) _____

Signed parent/carer 2:

Date:

Child's Name:

Year Group: