



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Attendance Policy

Approved by the LGB, November 2021

School attendance is a legal requirement. Equally, any absence from school will inevitably impact a child's ability to learn and their resulting academic performance. All pupils should aim to attend school 100% of the time.

1. A Statement of Policy on Attendance

- The School is committed to an expectation of maximum attendance for all pupils.
- We believe that full attendance is essential in order for pupils to achieve their potential.
- The School will not normally authorise absence for undocumented or unsubstantiated illness, medical or other appointments or for holidays in term time.
- The School will investigate any problems affecting a pupil's attendance and work with the parents and other appropriate agencies to resolve any issues.
- The school will look to act early to address patterns of absence.
- The policy takes into account the Department of Education document 'School Attendance' August 2020.

The School will take action

- By ensuring that all staff are aware of these expectations.
- By ensuring that all pupils are aware of these expectations.
- By working closely with parents to resolve any difficulties.
- By working, where necessary, with outside agencies.

Action is carried out

- By Form and Group Tutors
- Heads of Year, co-ordinated by the SLT member responsible for attendance (Mr T.Brown, Assistant Head)
- The Headmaster
- The DSL when necessary (Mr G.Collins, Assistant Head)
- EWO (Education Welfare Officer)

2. In pursuit of this Policy, the School has the following aims:

- To ensure that staff have high expectations regarding attendance.
- To ensure that parents are aware of, and share, the School's expectations with first day of absence telephone calls where necessary.
- To ensure that pupils conform to the School's regulations, by arriving on time properly prepared for the day.

3. The School will endeavour to implement these Aims as follows:

- The Headmaster will take overall responsibility for the Policy and its implementation, for liaison with the Governing Body, parents and appropriate outside agencies; and for the appointment within the School of a Designated Teacher with responsibility for implementing the Policy.
- The Designated Teacher is Mr T.Brown who will co-ordinate the work of the Heads of Year, Group Tutors and Form Tutors alongside Mr R Matley the Head of Sixth Form.

- Daily attendance – in the morning and afternoon - will be recorded using SIMS by the relevant tutor or teacher.
- Form and Group Tutors will be provided attendance information and prompted to discuss initial concerns with pupils.
- The school follows the '[Guidance on infection control in schools](#)' published by the Public Health Agency when acting upon absences.
- Parents must notify the school at the earliest possible time i.e. before 8.45 a.m. each morning of an absence. This can be done by either phoning the school, leaving a message on the absence line or by emailing absences at absences@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk.
- Parents must clearly state the pupil's name, form and nature of absence.
- Medical appointments should be arranged outside of school time wherever possible.
- The school must be notified a minimum of 3 days in advance of any medical appointment that have been made. Without this prior notification the absence will not be authorised.
- Reception staff will make daily calls if a child is marked absent without a valid reason.
- A pupil returning to school after an absence period must bring in a letter from parents, and hand it to the Form/Group tutor. This letter should give all the necessary details of the absence with any medical evidence, appointment letters, etc. If a pupil returns to school without a written explanation of their absence, then the absence will become unauthorised and marked as such on the register.
- Daily and overall attendance can be monitored by parents using the SIMS Parent App.
- It is the pupil's responsibility to catch up on the class work missed and/or submit any work which was due in their absence.
- Attendance and punctuality is monitored on a regular basis. Appropriate levels of challenge and support will be implemented where there are patterns of absence that gives cause for concern. If a child's attendance falls below 90% then they are classed as being persistently absent and in turn the school will inform and liaise with the Local Authority and the Education Welfare Officer. The Education Welfare Officer can and will issue legal proceedings where parents aren't meeting their legal obligation to ensure their child attends school.

4. Authorised Absence

- The Headmaster will authorise absence for the following reasons:
 - a) Illness where supported by appropriate documentation.
 - b) Unavoidable medical appointments, supported by appropriate documentation.
 - c) Religious observance (when notified in advance using the correct protocols).
 - d) Other family circumstances at his discretion in line with Department of Education and Local Authority guidelines.
 - e) absences that fall within the government guidelines and control measures for COVID-19

Additionally, in the Sixth Form

- e) Interviews & Open Days
- f) Courses
- g) Driving tests

Any expected absence must be communicated with the school well in advance and permission sought from the Headmaster.

5. Unauthorised Absence

- The Headmaster will not authorise absences for which no acceptable reason is provided.
- Parents are expected not to take holidays during term time unless there are *exceptional circumstances*. Parents should expect the Local Authority to serve a penalty notice in such circumstances.

- Attendance is monitored on a regular basis by Reception staff, Heads of Year and the Designated Teacher in charge of attendance, Mr T.Brown. These staff members will challenge and support pupils and parents where there are concerns with attendance rates or specific absences. They will also liaise with the Local Authority and seek support from the Educational Welfare Officer where there are concerns.

6. Leave of absence

- The law states that families do not have the right to take children out of school during term time for holidays or other activities. Permission for absences will only be granted when there are exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headmaster. Parents must make a formal request for leave of absence if they intend their child to be absent from school which is not related to the pupil's illness or medical needs. Please see the 'Religious Observance' form in relation to published religious festivals. <https://qmg.s.walsall.sch.uk/consent-forms/>

7. Absence from Individual Lessons

- All staff will take a class register on SIMs so that any pupils missing from a lesson can be highlighted and the appropriate action taken.
- If there is a highlighted absence from lesson where the pupil has previously been present reception must be immediately informed so that the whereabouts of the pupil can be confirmed.
- Truancy is a high-level behaviour issue and will result in a corresponding high-level sanction (the school sanctions ladder can be found within the school's Behaviour Policy).
- No pupil in years 7-13 may leave the premises during the school day without permission.
- Sixth form students can leave the school at lunchtime provided they follow the correct sign-out and sign-in procedure.

8. Lates & Exeats

- Pupils who arrive at school after registration, i.e. after 9.15 must sign the Late Book located in reception. Patterns of lateness will be challenged in accordance to the circumstances, i.e.:
 - Form/group tutor discussion with the pupil.
 - HOY, 3Cs, SLT, Saturday detentions.
 - Initial communication with parents, i.e. email query prompted by every late, letter home raising initial concern about punctuality, Educational Welfare Service letter raising initial concern from an authority's perspective.
 - Parental meeting.
 - EWO referral/visit.
 - Local Authority action.
- Pupils who have to leave the premises for medical or other authorised appointments before 3.40 p.m. must sign the Exeat Book in reception.
- At the end of the school day pupils must not remain on the school site after 4pm unless they are involved in an organised activity arranged and supervised by member of staff.

9. Arrangements for the Sixth Form

- Sixth formers are permitted to leave school during periods 5 and/or 6, the days when they can do this are pre-arranged and agreed in advance. Sixth form students should understand that this is a concession and not a right. Sixth form students are required to sign out at 2.00pm or 2.50pm.

- Year 13 pupils can sign-in at break on days when they are not required to be in school for periods 1 and 2. These days are pre-arranged and are agreed in advance with the pupil and their parents.
- Failure to follow these procedures when result in a removal of these privileges and further sanction.
- Mr Matley, Head of Sixth Form will oversee these arrangements with support from SLT.

10. Pupils Returning After Prolonged Absence

- In cases of prolonged and unavoidable absence, the Headmaster will publish details and work will be organised for the pupil.
- On the pupil's return, the Form/Group tutors and Heads of Year will monitor his/her progress and attendance record.

11. Absence due to COVID-19

- The school will use the X code on registers where pupils are absent due to having COVID symptoms. The pupil will take a PCR test, if the test is positive the absence then becomes an I code for 'Illness' moving forward from that point for the remainder of the isolation period. If the PCR test is negative but the pupil is unwell an I code will be used from that point until the pupil returns to school.
- In relation to isolation periods; if a pupil tests positive, their self-isolation period includes the day their symptoms started (or from the day they took the PCR test, if they did not have symptoms). The isolation period is 10 full days.

12. Removal from school roll

- In accordance with 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' pupils can and will be removed from the school roll in specific circumstances, i.e:

A pupil who has failed to return following extended authorised leave of absence can be removed from roll providing all three of the following three conditions are fulfilled:

- The pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted.
- There are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause.
- Both the school and the Local Authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the child's whereabouts.

The pupil has been missing from school for 20 days or more continuously, providing the following conditions are fulfilled:

- At no time was the absence during that period authorised by the school.
- There are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause.
- Both the school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the child's whereabouts.
- During the first ten days of absence, schools must make reasonable attempts to locate the child and facilitate his/her safe return to school. Enquiries should include writing to the parents, attempting to make telephone contact with parents, appropriate friends and relatives, speaking to other children and parents and home visits.

13. Penalty notices

- Regular school attendance is a legal obligation which is stated with the Education Act 1996. Not fulfilling the expectations placed upon parents under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 can be deemed as an offence

under Section 444 of the same Act. In turn Section 23 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003, allows for the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice to a parent if their child is not in regular attendance at school.

- In such a case the Local Authority may issue a penalty notice of £60 (per parent, per child) to be paid within 21 days, or £120 after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay this penalty notice may lead to a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.