



# Queen Mary's Grammar School

## Attendance Policy

Approved by the LGB, September 2024

Next review: LGB1, September 2025

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 'Working together to improve school attendance' August 2024.

### 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
- Year Teams, co-ordinated by the SLT member responsible for attendance (Miss R Naguthney, Assistant Headteacher)
- The Headmaster
- The DSL when necessary (Mr G Collins, Assistant Headteacher)
- EWO (Education Welfare Officer) and other colleagues at the Local Authority

### 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 through first day contact (contacting parents on the first day of absence where a reason has not been provided).
- 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 Senior Leader is Miss R Naguthney who will co-ordinate the work of the Year Teams, Group Tutors and Form Tutors alongside Mr R Matley (Head of Sixth Form).
- Daily attendance – in the morning and afternoon - will be recorded using SIMS/Edulink 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@qmg.merciantrust.org.uk](mailto:absences@qmg.merciantrust.org.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 contact if a child is marked absent without a valid reason.
- Daily and overall attendance can be monitored by parents using the Edulink 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 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 submitted 3 days in advance.
  - 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 any infections

*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 where 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, Year Teams and the Designated Teacher in charge of attendance, Miss R Naguthney. 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://gmgs.walsall.sch.uk/consent-forms/>

## 7. Absence from Individual Lessons

- All staff will take a class register on SIMs/Edulink 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 form time has begun, i.e. after 8.45 a.m. must sign the Late Book located in reception. Patterns of lateness will be challenged in accordance with 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 need 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 4 p.m. unless they are involved in an organised activity arranged and supervised by a 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.
- 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 Year Teams will monitor his/her progress and attendance record.

## **11. 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 £80 (per parent, per child) to be paid within 21 days, or £160 after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay this penalty notice may lead to a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.
- Where a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, a second Penalty Notice will be charged at £160 (per parent, per child) paid within 28 days.
- The third time an offence is committed either a term time holiday and/or irregular attendance, within 3 years of the first notice, a penalty notice cannot be issued and alternative action will be taken instead. This may include prosecution.

This policy follows the School's legal duties under the 'Equality Act' 2010, in respect of safeguarding and Section 90 and 91 of the 'Education and Inspections Act' 2006. It also includes guidance from the Department of Education document 'Working together to improve school attendance' August 2024 and 'Keeping children safe in education' September 2024.