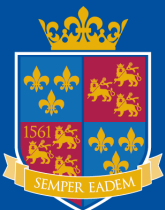




Queen
Elizabeth's
— ACADEMY —

Attendance Matters at QEA



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Part of
Diverse
Academies



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham

Attendance Matters at QEA

At Queen Elizabeth's Academy, we encourage all members of our academy community to strive for excellence. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. All students should be at the academy, on time, every day we are open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We do not accept excuses for absence except in extreme circumstances.

We expect all students to be punctual for the start of the day and for all lessons. Apart from an occasional emergency, there is no reason for students to be late for the academy day. Our academy day begins at 8.30am and we expect all students to be on site by 8.25am at the latest.

Missing out on education has a significant effect on students' life opportunities. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

The routines students develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and further aspirations depend on good attendance.

Why attendance matters:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence.
- Students make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Students find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with.
- Students find learning more satisfying.
- Students are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training.
- Students' mental health is improved.

Attendance procedures

Reporting an absence

What to do if your child is unwell

If a student is unable to attend the academy, parents/carers must contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence by phone. Please give your child's name, the reason for absence and how long you expect the absence to last. You will then need to contact the academy absence line on each subsequent day that the student is absent and inform the academy of an expected return date. A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required daily.

If a student is absent, we will:

- Contact parents on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- Make home visits if absence is prolonged and/or we are not able to contact you.
- Provide support to students to help them improve their attendance, if needed.

The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the attendance team.

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence, the school is required to start child missing in education procedures. Queen Elizabeth's Academy will make all the reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including home visits and making enquiries to known friends and wider family.

What to do if your child has an appointment

Please avoid making medical appointments during the academy day/term if possible. However, we do appreciate that this is sometimes unavoidable. In such instances, we require notification in advance. Please provide a note from home and/or appointment letter/card to confirm the appointment. Your child should attend school before the appointment and return afterwards where possible. The absence will only be authorised for the duration of the appointment, including travel time.

Attendance procedures

Calls to parents/carers

We take our safeguarding responsibility seriously. If a student is absent without parental contact and reason given, calls are made daily to the contact numbers the Academy holds on record. Calls are made on a daily basis, even where your child has been absent due to illness on previous days. We cannot assume your child is still ill unless you have notified us. We would not wish to put your child at risk by failing to contact you. Please ensure your child realises the importance of attending tutor on time and getting their present mark. Parents/carers can also support the school by ensuring we hold up to date contact numbers.

Requests for leave of absence during term time

The Education Act (1996) requires you to ensure your child attends the academy regularly. Before booking a holiday or requesting a leave of absence for your child you should consider very seriously how the absence will affect your child's education. If you still feel that you need to make a leave of absence request, this should be in writing and addressed to the principal.

Requests for student leave of absence during term time will be considered, however, it is extremely unlikely that requests purely for holiday purposes will be granted. Where exceptional circumstances exist, it may possible that a leave of absence will be authorised. Each request for absence will be reviewed and carefully considered on an individual basis.

Attendance procedures

Holidays in term time

Family holidays should take place during the school holiday dates. These are published in advance of the next academic year. Please be mindful that absence due to holiday is not, and never has been, a parent's entitlement. This is breaking the law and the school cannot legally grant permission for this. If holidays are taken in term time, parents/carers must inform the school in advance to take their child out of school for a holiday. This must be in writing addressed to the Principal. The absence will be unauthorised and legal action may be taken.

Leave of absence for other reasons

Absence will not be authorised for reasons such as shopping, birthdays, day trips, etc. If parents/carers wish their child to be absent for other reasons, such as compassionate leave, special family occasions, or to participate in sport or musical competitions etc. application should be made, in advance to the Principal. It may be necessary for parents to apply for a performance license in such circumstances.

Persistent absence students who are absent 10% or more of the time at school, for whatever reason, are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%.

The Academy monitors all absence thoroughly and the attendance data is shared with the Department for Education. If your child has persistent absence, both the parent/carers and the student will be subject to an attendance plan to improve their attendance.

Attendance procedures

Authorising Absence

Only the school can authorise absence. Government guidelines are specific and allow the school to authorise the following:

- Student absence through 'leave' given by the school (this commonly includes medical appointments, interviews and other similar special circumstances).
- Student illness.
- Religious observance, where applicable.

Examples of absence which have not been authorised in the past include:

- Shopping trips.
- 'Looking after' brother/sister, cat/dog, elderly relative etc.
- Arrival after the close of the register (8.55am) with no valid reason for the late arrival.
- Truancy.
- Day trips.
- Holidays taken during term time.

Unauthorised Absence Fixed Penalty Notices

In Nottinghamshire, parents can be fined if their child has in excess of 3 days unauthorised absence over a 6 week period. If payment is made within 21 days of receipt of a Penalty Notice the cost is £60 per parent/carer, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.

The School refers parents/carers who remove their child for a holiday to the Attendance Service for the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Nottinghamshire County Council's guidelines and further information on Fixed Penalty Notices can be found on their website: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk

Being punctual matters

Lateness to school

Students who arrive late for no good reason will be issued with a lunchtime detention the same day and parents will receive a text message which informs of the lateness and the detention as a consequence. According to DfE guidelines, registers must be closed after a certain time in the morning. Therefore, if a student arrives after 8.55am, they cannot receive a late mark but have to be marked as absent for the whole morning session. If the lateness is due to a legitimate reason e.g. a medical appointment, the absence can be authorised. Otherwise, the session is marked as an unauthorised absence. A text is sent home to parents informing them of this and the fact that they could be liable for a fixed penalty notice if the child receives 10 or more unauthorised absence sessions.

Good punctuality

We place a strong emphasis on good punctuality; we support this by:

- Giving sanctions to students who arrive late to school or lessons.
- Informing parents, by text, if their child arrives late for school.
- Addressing issues of poor time keeping with individual students and their parents.

Parental support for good punctuality

We would ask parents to support us in maintaining good punctuality by:

- Ensuring that their son / daughter gets up in plenty of time to be ready and prepared for school.
- Ensuring that their son / daughter has organised their bag and equipment the night before so that this does not delay departure in the morning.
- Discussing any issues of lateness to ensure this does not become a habit.
- Monitoring their child's attendance record when it is sent home and looking for patterns of lateness.

Good time keeping matters
Lost minutes = lost learning



Over one academic year

Ways for parents to support attendance matters

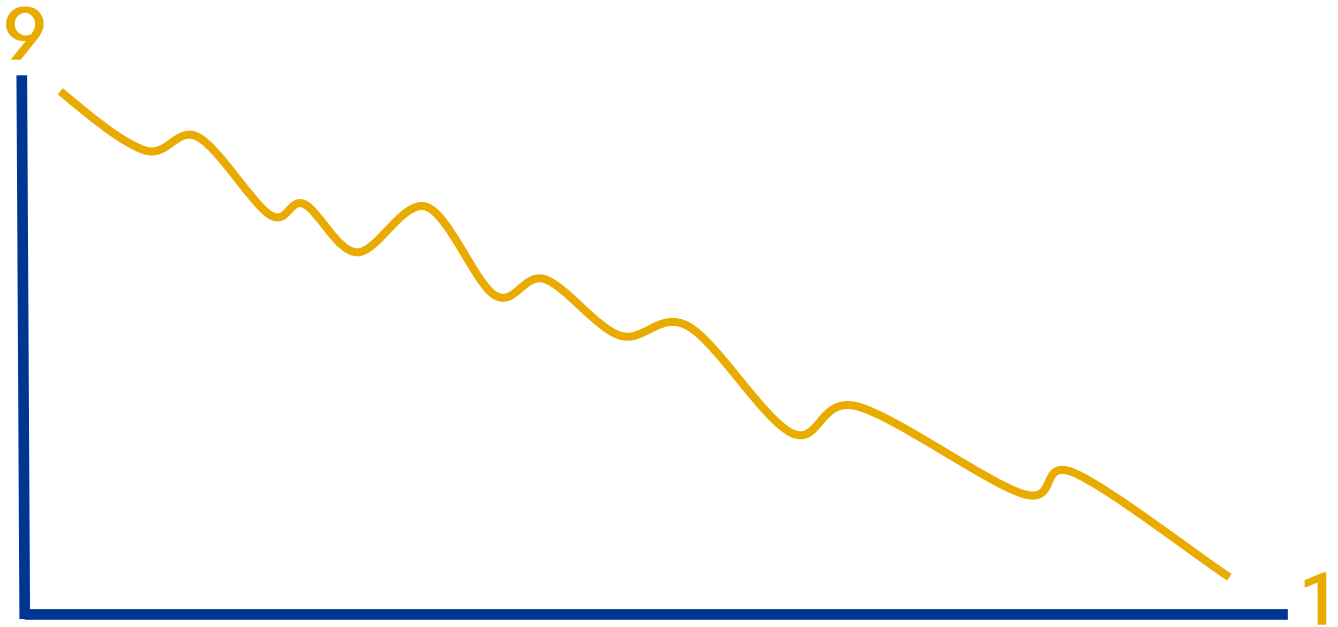
- Find out about your child's absence regularly and check if this matches your own records.
- Talk regularly with your child about school and how they feel about it. They are more likely to attend school if they feel supported and their anxieties are listened to.
- Phone the school as soon as possible to tell them why your child is absent and when you expect them to return.
- Only grant days at home for genuine illnesses.
- Avoid taking holidays in term time. Know the routines of the school days to avoid issues e.g. Have they brought in their PE kit?
- If you have concerns—phone the school.
- Praise and reward good attendance at school.
- Refer to the QEA website for parent advice.

For further advice contact Queen Elizabeth's Academy on 01623 623559 or Nottinghamshire County Council's Early Help Unit on 0115 804 1248.

The impact of poor attendance

Lost days = lost grades

Research suggests that for every 17 days missed from school, your GCSE results will go down one grade!



Days off cost good grades!

How we encourage good attendance

What does the academy do to encourage good attendance?

- Rewards for students with good and excellent attendance records.
- School, year group and tutor groups targets are set for attendance and individual targets where necessary.
- Share attendance data on 'Reach More Parents' app.
- Regular promotion of good attendance in assemblies and at parents'/carers' evenings.
- Detailed analysis of attendance figures and trends for individuals, year groups, sub groups and the whole school.
- Regular reports to governors.
- Computerised registration system which allows every lesson to be monitored.
- A member of the office staff dedicated to the administration of attendance.
- Contact with parents/carers when students absent or late.
- Dedicated School Attendance team.
- Support via our Family Support Workers for students and parents/carers where attendance difficulties are emerging.
- Loyalty cards for good attendance and behaviour.

QEA FAQs: Frequently asked questions for parents and carers

What can I do if my child is starting to present attendance difficulties?

These difficulties can show themselves in a number of different ways e.g. a reluctance to go to school, feigning illness, failure to attend school even though the child is sent, missing lessons whilst in school. If a problem seems to be emerging parents/carers should:-

- Talk to the child to try to ascertain if there are any problems or worries at school on the journey to or from school or at home.
- Contact your child's tutor as soon as possible.

Why doesn't QEA authorise holidays?

We are very aware of the essential role good attendance plays in achieving good academic progress and good social skills. We, therefore, do not authorise holidays in term time as doing so would be in direct contradiction to what we know is best for our students.

Why do you issue fixed penalty notices if parents/carers remove their children for a holiday?

We can not authorise an avoidable absence which causes harm to the continuity of a child's education. We are aware that holidays in term time are cheaper than those in school holidays and that this can be a motivating factor. The penalty notice therefore attempts to remove this incentive as well as reinforcing the importance of school attendance.

Please note: the fine monies are not given to the school.

Would I have received a fixed penalty notice if I had lied about the absence?

We expect honesty in our dealings with parents/carers and we are sure parents/carers wish to model this to their children. However, it is also our experience that children will tell their friends of their holiday who inadvertently tell their teachers. The length of absence can also trigger attendance officer investigation, including home visits, leading to the truth of the matter.

QEA FAQs: Frequently asked questions for parents and carers

What should I do if my child is reluctant to attend school?

There may be many reasons why a child is reluctant to attend school, both issues related to school but also issues which are not related to school in any way. Contact your child's tutor as soon as possible if your child is reluctant to attend school. They will suggest a meeting with you and your son/daughter to discuss strategies which can be put into place to support his/her attendance at school.

If my child refuses to attend school, can I be held responsible?

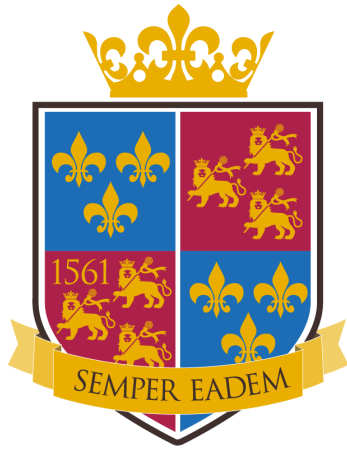
Yes. As the child's parent, you are expected to ensure that they receive an education. If your child does not attend school you could face court action resulting in a possible fine and or even imprisonment. Please contact your child's tutor if you are concerned about their attendance.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice - payment discharges your liability in this respect. However, it may be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with school and support agencies such as the NCC's Attendance Service.

What do I do if my child is ill?

Telephone the school office on each morning of your child's illness by 8.50am. If your child experiences a prolonged absence, a note from his or her doctor may be required by the school.



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