

# THE QUEENSWELL FEDERATION

## ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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### **Rationale**

Compulsory education in the United Kingdom begins at the start of a term after a child turns age 5 and ends at 16, unless a child's parents/carers opts for home schooling. Attendance at school is a legal requirement.

The term dates are set by the LA (and the daily starting & finishing times are determined by the Governing Body). Attendance at school on these dates and at those times is a legal requirement.

It is important that all parents and children know that the school expects and values good attendance and punctuality. Regular school attendance and good time keeping ensure that children have full access to the National Curriculum and all areas of school life. Good habits of attendance and punctuality should be established early.

### **Equalities**

At The Queenswell Federation, we believe it is the right of all pupils, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability or linguistic, cultural or home background to have access to high quality learning experiences in a stimulating and supporting environment where prejudice and stereotyping are challenged.

We are strongly committed to positive action to remove and challenge discrimination in all aspects of the Federation and its work. The importance of staff awareness regarding the dangers of preconceived expectations based on stereotypes is discussed and we bear this in mind in relation to attendance and punctuality.

### **Aims**

- To make parents/carers aware of their legal obligations and requirements
- To ensure maximum attendance and punctuality
- To help prevent disruption to the learning environment caused by lateness and absences
- To encourage children to acquire good habits of punctuality which will be needed throughout their school life and in the adult world of work
- To ensure children do not regularly miss important areas of the curriculum

### **Objectives**

- To ensure the Pupil's Registration Regulations 2016 Act is fully implemented by marking an attendance register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.
- To ensure the distinction of authorised and unauthorised absences in registers as described in The Education (Pupil Attendance Records) Regulations 1991.
- To follow up unexplained absences on the first day of absence.
- To offer preventative, early advice to parents and carers whose children are beginning to establish patterns of absence or lateness.

## **Responsibilities**

### *The Governing Body*

- To develop the policy and ensure the policy is maintained and reviewed. This is delegated to the Safeguarding & Learning Committee.
- To delegate the day-to-day management of this policy to the Head Of School

### *The Executive Headteacher*

- To have an oversight of the Attendance & Punctuality Policy in practice
- To communicate with the Heads Of School and Attendance Officer regarding levels of attendance & punctuality

### *The Head Of School*

- To have an oversight of the attendance and punctuality policy and ensure the policy is followed at all times.
- To follow up patterns of absence and lateness.
- To liaise with the EWO service and Attendance Officer.
- To communicate the policy to parents and carers.
- To delegate appropriate staff to be 'first response' to absences.
- To report ongoing concerns to the Executive Headteacher

### *The Class Teacher*

- To mark attendance registers as required.
- To follow up absences with verbal requests for reasons to children and their parents.
- To report attendance and punctuality issues promptly to Head Of School or, Attendance Officer, particularly with regards to safeguarding

### *The Attendance Officer*

- To enter reasons for absence into the register.
- To attempt first day telephone contact to follow up unexplained absence.
- To inform the Head Of School should patterns of absence be identified.
- To maintain electronic records of attendance.
- To follow up absences with verbal or written requests for excuses to children and their parents and enter reasons for absence in the register.
- To monitor attendance and work with the EWO and Head Of School in ensuring good punctuality & attendance
- To attend initial court assessments meetings
- To collate, analyse and present data and audits as required by the LMT and DfE

## **Guidelines**

- Parents/carers will be informed about term dates and INSET days in advance through regular newsletters and on the website
- Throughout the school year, reminders will be sent home informing parents of the times of the school day
- The school should be notified in advance of any absences due to planned appointments e.g. doctors, dentist, however these should be arranged outside of school hours wherever possible
- Parents/carers are asked to phone and inform the school before 8:30am if their child is going to be absent that day.
- Reasons for absence can be given in a variety of ways: letter, telephone or e-mail

- Siblings must not be kept off school if other children are ill
- Absence without notification will be followed up by the Attendance Officer who will contact parents/carers for details
- A summary of the policy & expectations for attendance & punctuality will be published in newsletters throughout the year
- The Attendance Officer will monitor patterns of absence and liaise with the Head Of School & Education Welfare Officer (EWO), who will follow up any concerns
- A 'walk to/from school alone' list for children in years 5 & 6 only will be collated and the Attendance Officer will call those parents/carers first should a child not be in school

Children who arrive at school late:

JUNIORS	INFANTS
Between 8.45 and 9.00 will be marked as late	Between 9.00 and 9.15 will be marked as late
After 9.00 - will be signed into the signing in book in the office and marked as an Unauthorised Absence	After 9.15 - will be signed into the signing in book in the office and marked as an Unauthorised Absence

- Incentives are provided to encourage good punctuality and attendance
- Children uncollected at the end of the school day will be supervised by Office or welfare staff. Their names will be entered on the late log with time of collection, reason for late collection and signature of member of staff releasing child to parent recorded. Should a pattern of regular late collection occur or regular lateness of arrivals, the Head Of School would seek a meeting with the parents/carers to express concern. A letter will follow the meeting if the situation continues advising that a fixed penalty of £10 may be issued for late collections. If a child is not collected after 30 minutes, they will be placed in the after-school club if there is availability and a charge will be made to parents or carers. Should a child not be collected by 6.00 p.m. LMT will take the child to the local police station or the Children and Families Service.
- All requests for Exceptional Leave of Absence are granted at the discretion of the Head Of School, and only exceptional circumstances will be authorised. All leave of absence must be requested in advance on the 'Application for Exceptional Leave Of Absence' form. A child's previous attendance will be taken into consideration. The Infant & Junior Heads Of School will liaise if children from both schools are requesting absence.
- Special arrangements may be made for armed services children whose particular circumstances may require leave of absence at short notice.

## **LEAVERS**

There are a number of ways in which the school is made aware of a child on roll who is or may be leaving mid-year. This may include:

- Completion of a leaving form (available at the school office);
- Disclosure by the child;
- Verbal indication by the parent or carer to a member of staff;
- Notification by another school;
- Verbal indication by somebody other than the parent/carers;
- Notification by the Local Authority (Admissions department) that the child has been offered a place at another school.

Procedures:

Procedures for children leaving the school follow the London Borough of Barnet Guidance (April 2013) and the Barnet Protocol for the Transfer of Records (2016).

For children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan or a Child In Need plan, guidelines as outlined in the London Child Protection Procedures should be followed.

#### *Children leaving with advanced notice*

Any member of staff who is informed of a child leaving, by whatever means, should immediately notify the school office;

- Once the school is informed that a child is leaving, the office or welfare staff will inform relevant members of LMT
- Office staff will send a 'leaving form' to the parent/carer;
- Parents/carers should return the form to the school office;
- If the future school is named on the form, then the school office will contact to verify this by phone. Dates for pupil transfer are confirmed. Notification of the child leaving is passed to the class teacher;
- The teacher will gather the child's work books, art work etc. which will then be passed to the parent or carer by the class teacher on the child's last day;
- The green folder containing the child's records and reports, together with any confidential information (such as safeguarding information) held in the school office and is sent directly to the new school under separate cover;
- The child will remain on roll until the School Administrator has confirmed the child's start date with the new school. Once this has been confirmed, an electronic transfer of data (CTF) is completed;
- If the future school is unknown by the child's leaving date, then the paper-based records will be kept in the office and will be sent when a new school has been identified (either by parent notifying us or the EWO, or alternatively the school may contact us). If the child is moving to a new address and the name of the new school is not known, then the school must obtain details of the new address. The child will remain on roll until notification of the new school has been received or a Child Missing Education (CME) form has been completed and sent to the Education Welfare Team at the Local Authority.
- For schools overseas, documentation is passed on to the parent/carer. Confidential information is held at the school. If there are safeguarding concerns, the school may request to see tickets for travel and will notify the Education Welfare Team.

#### *Children leaving without advanced notice*

This may occur when a child fails to return to school following a holiday or at any other time of the school year. The following procedures should be followed:

- On the first day a child is not in school without a valid reason a member of the attendance officer will contact the family to seek reasons for absence;
- If no contact is made after one week, information is sent to the Education Welfare Team who will continue the investigations;
- If the child continues to be absent for 10 school days and neither the school, the LA education welfare or social care services have been able to confirm any reason given for absence, it is permissible under current regulations for the child's name to be removed from the school roll and for their details to be uploaded onto the DFE lost pupil database via their secure data transfer system. This will be done in communication with the Local Authority.
- A Child Missing Education (CME) Form is completed and sent to the Education Welfare Team.

#### **Children Missing From Education (CME)**

Children who leave the school or go off roll for other reasons must be reported to the LA via a CME form; this also applies to children missing for 10 days or more. Further guidance is given in the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2016. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Of School should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted (see DfE website for more information).

**Family holidays during term time will not normally be authorised. However, in the case of emergency or exceptional circumstances, parents or carers can make a request to the Head Of School. It is the Head Of School's discretion to authorise such instances.**

Parents have no right to remove their children from school for the purpose of a holiday.

- Where leave is granted for a specified period, the leave will be recorded using the relevant code.
- The Head Of School may refuse the whole period requested by a pupil's parents or carers, or may grant part of the requested period, or may grant the whole of the requested period.
- A letter refusing a request will explain the reasons for the refusal and what action will be taken if the parents ignore the refusal and keep their child away.
- The Head Of School will have discretion to allow leave of absence if he/she believes that the circumstances warrant it, namely:
  1. For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.
  2. When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Leave of absence will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Where economic factors are cited – cheap package holidays or air fares.
- During end of Key Stage assessment periods.
- Where children have had poor attendance patterns.
- Where availability of the desired accommodation is cited as the reason for the request.

The Head Of School will also take into account the following factors when considering requests:

- Whether the leave of absence is at an appropriate time in the child's academic development.
- Whether the trip/excursion can be taken in the school holidays.
- Whether there have been repeated requests

Where permission is granted the Head Of School will state in writing:

- The expected date of return.
- That the parents are expected to contact the school if anything delays the pupil returning to school when expected.

What action will be taken if the pupil fails to return when expected.

- Where a pupil fails to return after the expected return date the Executive Headteacher may take steps to remove the pupil from the school roll.

1. The Attendance Officer will ensure that there was no good reason for the pupil's absence, such as disrupted travel arrangements or illness, before deleting the pupil.
2. The Attendance Officer and the Education Welfare Team will make reasonable enquiry to locate the pupil before the deletion is made.
3. The school will delete the child from the school registers and transfer their information to the National Lost Pupils Database.
4. If the pupil has a good reason to be absent he/she will be marked 'authorised absence' using the relevant code.
5. If the pupil is located, the school will take steps to address the reasons for their failure to attend, accessing support for other agencies where appropriate.
  - Parents or carers who take their children on holiday without the school's consent, will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Education Welfare Team of £60, rising to £120 per parent for each child. Parents who fail to pay will be subject to criminal prosecution.
  - Parents or carers who fail to return from granted leave of absence on the stated date, may be subject to a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority.
  - Religious holidays. Recognised religious holidays are authorised absences. Parents do not have to request leave for recognised holidays as there is no question of permission for absence being required.
  - Families seeking to extend a period of absence around a religious holiday must make a request for leave in accordance with this policy.
  - Each request must be considered on its own merits. There should be no presumption that such requests should be authorised solely on the grounds of an apparent religious context.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Absences, both authorised and unauthorised, are reported to parents in the annual written report

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

- The Attendance Officer maintains the attendance database and reports all attendance concerns to the Head Of School monthly (unless there are extreme concerns).
- Initial concerns are followed up by the Attendance Officer. Parents are informed of the level and nature of the concern in writing and through a follow up meeting with the Headteacher if necessary.
- Should concerns continue, the matter is referred onto the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO), who will be aware of any issues already before this stage. He/she will take further action based upon advice from the Headteacher & other agencies.
- The Head Of School may decide to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for parents who take unauthorised absences.
- The effectiveness of this policy will be judged on the reduction of both authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Governors will be informed of levels of attendance each year via the Executive Headteacher's report.
- Governors are responsible for the monitoring and implementation of this policy.