

Queen's College, London & Queen's College Preparatory School

Attendance Policy



*Due for review during
Michaelmas Term 2025*

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1. Aims

Queen's College, London and Queen's College Preparatory School (hereafter the School) are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Council

The Council is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure that the SLT members in the School fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the School records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the School works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the School's policies and ethos
- Making sure the School's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the School has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping SLT focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with SLT to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole School and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the School's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the School is struggling with attendance, working with SLT to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The School's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The School's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Principal of Queen's College and the Head of Queen's College Preparatory School (QCPS) to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Principal of the College and Head of QCPS

As headteachers, the Principal and Head are responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the School
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Council
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority (in which the pupil resides) when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the School's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leaders are responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the College and QCPS

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance are India D'Arcy (idarcy@qcl.org.uk) at the College and Georgia Habananada (ghabanananda@qcps.org.uk) at QCPS.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal/ Headmistress when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer for the College is India D'Arcy (idarcy@qcl.org.uk) and for QCPS the officer is Georgia Habananada (ghabanananda@qcps.org.uk).

3.5 Form Tutors and Teachers who teach Period 6 (QCL) or Period 15 (QCPS)

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance, with the correct codes (see Appendix 1), for the morning session during form time on a daily basis. For the afternoon session, teaching staff who teach period 6 will register pupils, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

For the afternoon session in the prep, teaching staff who teach period 15 at 13:30 will register pupils, using the correct codes, and submit this information to the school office on the same day.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to pastoral leads where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult/s the School decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the School office to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the School with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Heads of Year/ Heads of Section/ Deputy Head Pastoral at the College and Heads of Pre-Pre and Prep at QCPS. These members of staff can be contacted via the front office for each site.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

The School will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

The School will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

The School will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The School will keep every entry on the attendance register for six years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day at the College starts at 8.40am and ends at 4.05pm. At QCPS the school day starts at 8.35am and has a staggered finish. For pupils in Reception, the day finishes at 3.00pm; for pupils in Forms I and II the day finishes at 3.10pm; for pupils the day finishes at 3.30pm and those pupils in Forms V and VI finish at 3.30pm on Mondays and 4.00pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. On Friday, pupils in pre-prep finish at 3.00pm and those in prep finish at 3.10pm.

Pupils must arrive at the College and QCPS by 8.35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at QCPS at 8.35 am and at 8.40am at the College. Both registration sessions will close at 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.35p.m in the College and will be close at 1.50pm. In QCPS the second session will be taken at 1.30pm and close at 1.50pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via absence@qcl.org.uk at the College or by calling 020 7291 7000. The pupil's Form Tutor and jlavender@qcps.org.uk should be contacted at QCPS either by email or by calling 020 7291 6000.

The School will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the School has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than five days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the School will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the School is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the School in advance of the appointment.

At QCPS request for absence must be authorised by the Head via rwinthrop@qcps.org.uk.

At the College request for absence must be made via the front office by emailing absence@qcl.org.uk.

However, parents are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 5 outlines which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed at 9.05am will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- The School monitors lateness. At QCPS parents will be contacted if punctuality is an issue and a plan will be put in place to ensure the pupil is on time. At the College, pupils are given a Friday after school detention (4.15-5.00pm) if they are late to 3 morning registrations during any half term period. Parents are informed of this. If punctuality remains an issue, a plan will be put in place for individual pupils.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil that is expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the School will:

- Contact the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the School cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the School may contact social services or the police if they have concerns as to the whereabouts of the pupil
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the School will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, a penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below).

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of ‘parent’, as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child’s attendance and absence levels. This information will be provided in half-termly reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal of the College/ Head of QCPS will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Principal/ Head will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the national [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Principal’s/ Head’s discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The School considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least a week before the absence. The Principal/ Head may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the School will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from the School (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the School may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

The School will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The Principal/ Head (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the School issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the School will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the School may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The School promotes the importance of attendance via newsletters and parent reception evenings. At the College the importance of attendance is also stressed during form times and assemblies.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

The School will work closely with families to remove barriers preventing attendance. Attendance plans will be tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils. The School will also adjust timetables, including offering staggered returns, if appropriate. The School will work with the nurse and counsellors as well as external partners such as CAMHS and Children's Services to remove barriers to attendance.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority, in which the pupil resides.

At QCPS, the form tutor will be the point of contact with the family and work will be sent home if deemed appropriate.

The College will offer pupils additional support such as a teacher mentor of their choice; daily check ins with a member of the pastoral team. In exceptional circumstances and with the authorisation of the Deputy Head Pastoral and/ or Deputy Head Academic, work will be sent home.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

To support pupils back into School after a lengthy or long period of absence, the School will work with families to produce a plan to meet the needs of the individual. This plan could include a staggered return; a reduced timetable (including homework) a peer or teacher mentor. Where appropriate, work for core subjects will be prioritised.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The School will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The School will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the the School's governing body – the Council.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The School will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including neuro-diversity and SENCO leads and DSLs).
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the School's strategy for improving attendance.

The School will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the School (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school

- Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- Explain the help that is available
- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the School will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the DSLs at Queen's College and QCPS. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Council.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Behaviour policy
- Queen's College Punctuality and Lateness policy
- Queen's College Behaviour Management and Discipline policy
- Queen's College Preparatory School Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school

Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason

	circumstances	given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays