



Queen Berengaria School

Children are at the heart of all we do

Attendance Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction
 2. Scope and legal framework
 3. Aims
 4. Objectives
 5. Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality
 6. Definitions
 - 6.1 Authorised
 - 6.2 Unauthorised
 - 6.3 Exceptional circumstances
 7. School Procedures
 8. Roles and Responsibilities
 9. Appendix A Application for Term-Time Leave for Exceptional Circumstances
 10. Appendix B Application for Term-Time Absence for Post-Operational Leave
 11. Appendix C Unauthorised Attendance Flow Chart
 12. Appendix D Template Letter – Persistent Absence
 13. Appendix E Attendance Graduated Response
 14. Appendix F Infographic - Attendance Matters
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1. Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important if pupils are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Queen Berengaria School (QBS) recognises the link between attendance and good learning and endeavour to work in partnership with all parents and carers to uphold and reinforce this message to impact positive outcomes for our pupils. As a school we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Appendix F illustrates further insight into lost learning time.

2. Scope & Legal Framework

This policy applies to all children registered at QBS and it has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from MOD Schools. DCS's MOD school direction and guidance mirror, where reasonably practicable overseas, Central Government policy for England directed through the DfE, All school staff, Governors and parents are referred to the DCS Directive 3.2.6 School Attendance DCS Apr 2020 v2.1.

The MOD applies the statutory requirement for parents to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive an 'efficient and suitable'¹ education. Should parents fail to do so there are

¹ Education defined through case law: Mr Justice Woolf in the case of R v Secretary of State for Education and Science, ex parte Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School Trust, *the Times* (April 1985)

mechanisms that can be brought to bear, if necessary, in order to enforce attendance for Defence personnel who come under scope of the Armed Forces Act 2006.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher, staff, and Governors work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

3. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Ensure all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

4. Objectives

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, with allowance for those children with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to all aged children in our school to promote good habits at an early age.
- To work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and other agencies so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- To promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Monitor attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

5. Strategies for Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

6. Definitions

6.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- The Head and Deputy may authorise known advance absences up to a maximum of 10 school days, and will deal with every case on its merits.
- We do not authorise absence for holidays during term time. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority, consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.
- The school will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's (or the designated deputy) discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments;
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

6.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy;
- Unexplained absences;
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- Looking after other children/ birthdays or staying home with visitors;
- Day trips or holidays in term time not authorised by the school.

Whilst any child may be off school because of illness, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regards to attendance are best sorted out between the school, parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem.

6.3 Exceptional circumstances

Headteachers (or the designated deputy) may not grant leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be '*exceptional circumstances*'. If you believe you have exceptional circumstances, you will need to apply using form at **Appendix A**.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

- bereavement or serious illness of relatives;
- medical needs where treatment is required in the UK;
- Post-Operative Tour Leave (POTL) also entitles parents to an exceptional further 10 days of authorised absence to recognise the importance of re-establishing the family unit after prolonged active duty. Whilst it is recognised that families face unique circumstances in a military community, given operational tours, it is important that parents understand the potential risks of non- attendance at school to a child's education. The granting of POL to a serving parent is distinct from the granting of term-time absence for a pupil and it is important to highlight that families can and do enjoy the POTL of the serving parent without going away and without therefore requesting that their child is absent from school during term time. Parents must have confirmation from their Command that they are entitled to apply for this absence and will need to use the Application Form at **Appendix B**.

7. School Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.

7.1 Attendance Register.

Mirroring statutory requirements for school attendance (England), our school is required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and at the beginning of the session following the brunch break. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Authorised Absent (due to medical/dental appointments, exceptional circumstances or POTL).

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

7.2 Times

- Pupils must arrive in school by 0800 hrs. on each school day.
- The register for the first session will be taken at 0800 hrs. and will be kept open until 0810 hrs.
- The second daily register will be taken at 1150 hrs. and will be kept open until 1200 hrs.

7.3 Unplanned Absence & Following Up Absence (Appendix C)

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence. For example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 0745 hrs. or as soon as practically possible.

When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence. All absences are recorded as either *authorised or unauthorised absences* on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance.

When a school is unable to contact a parent, the Unit Welfare Officer/Education Welfare Officer will be contacted to provide safeguarding support.

7.4 First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. **Office staff** check all of the registers on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

7.5 Illness

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide 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 prior to recording.

7.6 Long-term illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send learning material home, so that children can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

7.7 Medical or Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance written notice to the class teacher or school office (letter or email) is required for authorising these absences.

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.

7.8 Other Term Time Absence

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance.

7.9 Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of **at least 96%**.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. Throughout the primary school years, we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via a phone call or a letter which is sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Unit Welfare Office/DCS Senior Educational Welfare Officers / Social Worker services.

7.10 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before registration has been taken will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

7.11 Persistent Lateness

The school follows a three step system (**Appendix C**) for children who are persistently late:

Step 1 - When a child is considered to be persistently late then the school will send a letter to the parents/carers informing them of their child's persistent lateness and the school's concerns. Template letter can be found at **Appendix D**

Step 2 - If a child continues to be persistently late the school will send a second letter to the parents/carers requesting a meeting to discuss the matter and see if there are any ways in which the school can help.

Step 3 - In the event that the child's punctuality still does not improve then the school will refer the matter to the relevant Unit Welfare Officer / DCS / Senior Educational Welfare Officers (EWO).

7.12 Reporting to parents

If a pupil's absence goes above **three** days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a school all staff share the responsibility for:

- Providing a welcome atmosphere;
- Providing a safe learning environment;
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality; monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality (teachers and office staff)
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence (office staff/teacher)
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition; (all teaching staff)
- Inform parents of their child's attendance and punctuality through pupil progress meetings and the annual written reports.
- When an absence request is submitted;
- Ensure that this policy and the schools' procedures for absence requests are published and accessible on our school website.

Monitoring Attendance – Reference Appendix E

Parents have a responsibility to self-monitor their child's attendance and clearly communicate with the school if their child needs to be absent for any reason or if any concerns or situations arise that will impact attendance levels.

DCS does not operate an Education Welfare Service as a local authority in England would, however, does employ Education Welfare Officers (EWO) to support schools and settings. The lead responsibility for monitoring and ensuring attendance remains with the school staff. This makes it particularly important that all staff and school governors have a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.

Class teachers are responsible for daily registration, recording and reporting attendance and absence adhering to school operating procedures (SOP).

Office staff, have the responsibility for ensuring that all the attendance data is accurately recorded on the BROMCOM attendance software.

The Headteacher and SENDCO have responsibility to ensure appropriate monitoring systems are in place, and to monitor attendance and absence through holding regular meetings with designated office staff and/or class teachers. Discussion will address all attendance concerns and appropriate actions will be taken following these meetings such as a phone call or letter sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

The Headteacher will report to Governors termly data concerning attendance and absence and SGC will have Attendance as a rolling agenda item at every meeting.

The MOD Schools Educational Welfare Officers (EWO) will monitor the effectiveness in this area during their safeguarding audits on school attendance.

MOD Schools Assistant Chief Education Officer/ School Improvement Adviser (ACEO/SIA) will conduct oversight of pupil attendance during their core visits.

HQ DCS (MOD Schools) provides the following support:

- development and monitoring of school procedures;
- contribution to in-service training of school staff;
- direct work with families and pupils.

QBS staff will liaise with the local Commands in particular the Unit Welfare Officer. Where there is no designated Unit Welfare Officer then the Commander/Commanding Officer/Head of Establishment assumes or delegates this function.

15. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

All policies, particularly,

1. Curriculum & Assessment
2. Marking & Feedback; Monitoring Quality & Standards
3. Home School Agreements
4. Behaviour
5. SEND and Equality



Queen Berengaria School

Application for Term-Time Leave for Exceptional Circumstances

Name of child: _____ Class: _____

I would like to request permission for my child to be granted term time absence from school on the grounds of 'exceptional circumstances' for the following reasons and understand that family holidays are not a valid reason and that any absence may be detrimental to my child's education.

Explanation of exceptional circumstances:

I am requesting term time absence for my child from (date) _____ until _____ resulting in an absence of _____ school days.

I understand that I may be required to provide evidence of the above if required and that this may require this information to be discussed with the relevant Unit Welfare Office.

Signature of parent: _____ Date: _____

Headteacher (designated deputy) use only

Thank you for your application for 'exceptional leave' for your child.

Your child's attendance record for the last term/academic year is: _____ % attendance

a) I confirm that this exceptional absence has been agreed:

Signed _____ Date _____

b) Your request for exceptional leave has not been agreed for the following reason:

Signed _____ Date _____



Queen Berengaria School

Application for Term-Time Absence for Post Operational Leave (POL)

Name of child: _____ Class: _____

I would like to request permission for my child to be granted term-time absence from school during term time due to my own post operational leave. I understand that any term time leave for children is discouraged and may be detrimental to my child's education.

Explanation for Post Operational Leave
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I understand that DCS MOD Schools expects that a maximum of ten days is applied for, and that the Serving person must have returned from a minimum of a 3-month tour of duty.

I understand that permission for this exceptional POL term time leave from school can only be granted by my child's headteacher.

Unit Declaration confirming entitlement to apply for term-time absence in support of POL:

Name of UNIT _____ Rank/Name of Unit representative

This is to certify that _____ is entitled to apply for term time absence from school for their child in support of post operational leave.

Signature of Unit Representative _____ Unit Stamp

I am requesting term time absence for my child from (date) _____ until _____ resulting in a total absence of _____ school days.

Signature of parent: _____ Date: _____

Head teacher(designated deputy) use only:

Thank you for your application for 'post-operational leave' for your child.

Your child's attendance record for the last term/academic year is: _____ % attendance and the number of sessions missed last term/year was _____

a. I confirm that this exceptional leave has been agreed:

Signed _____ Date _____

b) Your request for exceptional POL leave has not been agreed for the following reason:

Signed _____

Date _____

Copied:

Parent

Teacher

Child school record

Unauthorised Attendance Flow Chart

Stage 1

First unauthorised absence recorded:

(day 1) 2 Sessions missed: Welfare T/C from school
 (day 2) 4 Sessions missed: Further Welfare T/C from school
If more than 4 sessions missed with the same illness, request medical evidence such as drs note.
 (day 3) If parents are not contactable after 6 missed sessions: Welfare visit to be undertaken by school. - Offer of referral to informal EWO support
 (day 4) 8 Sessions missed: Depending on success of welfare visit, parents to be invited in for an informal attendance discussion.
 (day 5) 10 sessions missed: If after 5 days, no attendance has been achieved and parents not contacted, child is reported as Missing from Education and reported to the EWO.

Unauthorised Persistent Lates (UPLs).

(day 1) Late arrival: Welfare T/C from school
 (day 2) Repeat Late arrival: Further Welfare T/C from school – offer of referral to informal EWO support
 (day 3) Repeat Late arrival: Welfare visit school and EWO if possible.
 (day 4) Prolific Late arrivals: Referral to EWO service for support. After this point, UPLs are supported in the same way as Repeat Unauthorised Absences

Attendance Letters from Head Teacher to be sent to parents/carers if by day 4, no contact with family has been made and child remains out of school.



Stage 2



Repeat Unauthorised Absences & Persistent Lates

If attendance is **above 98%** and pupil has two separate unauthorised absences: School to monitor attendance.
 If attendance is **above 96%** and pupil has two separate unauthorised absences: T/C from schools to discuss absence and invite to informal meeting with EWO and school. *Letter to be sent as a follow up advising around good school attendance, importance etc.*
 If attendance is **below 96%** or 3 separate unauthorised absences: Referral to EWO and parents/carers invited in for MOD Attendance Review (MOR) *EWO Flow chart to be followed moving forward.*

Continued Unauthorised Absence – no contact

If a child is not in school for 5 or more days (10 sessions) the child is deemed **MISSING** from Education (**CME**) and must be reported to EWO for tracking. School should make every effort within reason to contact the family and track the child's location and any updates should be shared directly with the EWO.

Continued Unauthorised Absence – contact made

If a child is not in school for 5 or more days (10 sessions) but the family are in contact with the school, the child is deemed **MISSING OUT** on Education. Referral to EWO formal support with parents/carers invited to MOD Attendance Review (MOR). *EWO Flow chart to be followed moving forward.*

Attendance Letters from Head Teacher to be sent to parents/carers at each stage, advising of next steps. *Letter template available*



Stage 3



Repeat Unauthorised Absence, Persistent Lates and Continued Unauthorised Absences.

If attendance continues **below 96%** despite formal support from EWO. **After 3 MOR's** (timescales individual to the needs of the family), consideration for initiating an assessment of supportability as the families needs may not be able to be met overseas. Further EWO support can be provided if DCS, School and Command all in agreement, this will be agreed on individual circumstances.

Continued Unauthorised Absence – no contact

If after **28 days**, school (with EWO support) unable to locate child, the child can be "off-rolled" from the setting and will remain with EWO for continued CME tracking. Child **MUST** remain on-roll for 28 academic days before being off-rolled.

Template Letter Persistence Absence

Dear PARENT/CARER

Persistent Absence Letter 1/2/3

I am writing to you to inform you that your child's current school attendance is % with % of this being unauthorised.

Currently your child's attendance is at Stage 1/2/3.

I have attached a copy of our attendance flow chart for your reference.

Please delete depending on stage

Stage 1: Your child has missed X sessions since X date. Our Education Welfare Office is able to provide informal support if you wish to access this please let us know. If your child's attendance does not improve by X date, we will move to stage 2 of our attendance process.

Stage 2: Your child has now missed further sessions despite support at stage 1. They have now missed X sessions. We would like to invite you in for a MOD Attendance Review (MOR) on X date/time/location. Our Education Welfare Officer will be available to attend this review to support you and your child moving forward.

Stage 3: Despite support at stage 1 and 2, your child's attendance has not improved. At this point we are requesting a review of your family's supportability overseas and further details will be provided to you. You were informed of this decision at your last MOR on X date.

At QBS, we strive to achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people and positive school attendance and attainment is at the forefront of our focus. Supported by Defence Children's Services our school is available to support you and your family at every stage of your child's education.

If you have any questions about the attendance process, please speak to us at the earliest possible opportunity.

Yours sincerely, [can be handwritten or typed]

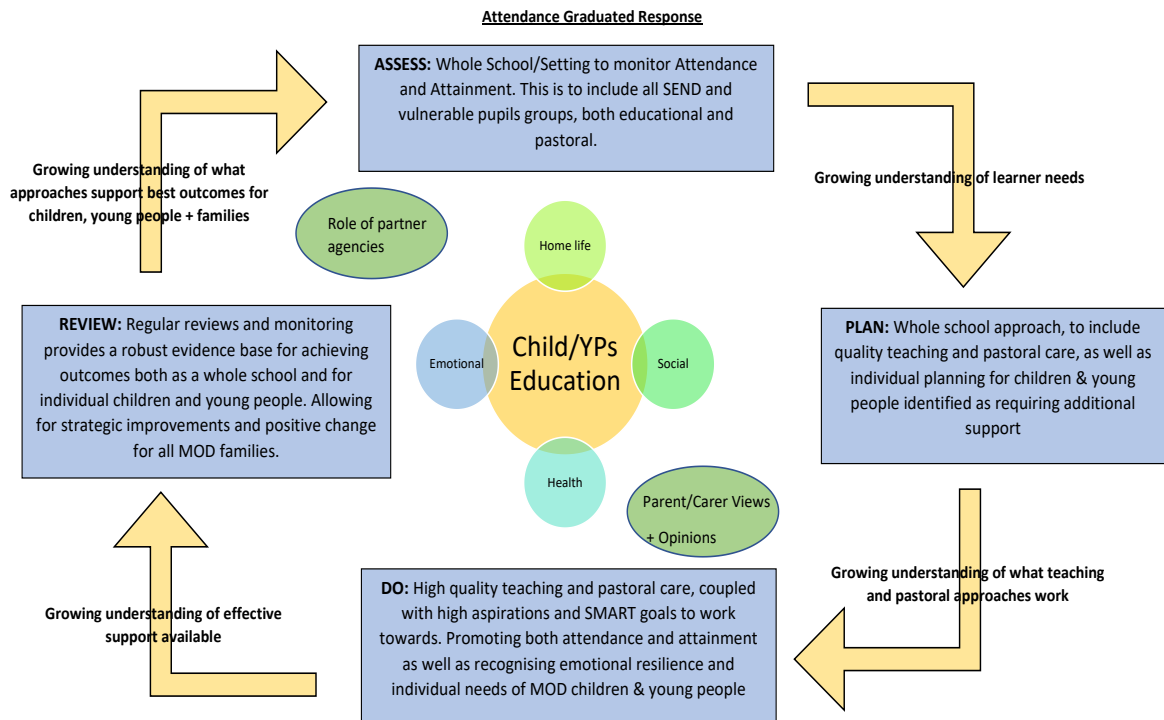
Add signature or [Signed on original]

Name / Rank (if appropriate)

Job title, if not included in address

Copied to: List of copy addressees

Attendance Graduated Response



Infographic – Attendance Matters

