



ATTENDANCE POLICY

**QUEEN BOUDICA
COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Queen Boudica Primary School Attendance Policy

This policy was agreed in consultation with the whole school community/stakeholders and will be regularly reviewed (including an annual review by Governors) to ensure it is fit for purpose; the review process will evidence that every day practice reflects what is written in the policy.

The policy will be publicised widely; for example copies will be placed in our staffroom, in school reception areas, and on our website.

We have used the Essex model Attendance Policy as a basis for formulating this policy; expanding or adding specific detail as appropriate to our school.

Statement of Intent or Mission Statement

At Queen Boudica Primary School we aim to provide for all children an enjoyable education which helps them to fulfil their potential, discover their talents and instils in them a lifelong love of learning. We want children to become independent and be able to make a positive contribution to the community. Alongside this, we believe that developing children's self-esteem and confidence is fundamental to their learning. We aim to be a sustainable school that is guided by the principle of care: "Care for oneself, care for each other and care for the environment." We are committed to ensuring that every child achieves the highest possible academic standards.

We believe that excellent attendance is crucial to achieving our aims and that poor attendance can significantly impact on a child's development and learning. Our mission is to ensure that every child's attendance is good and that we take swift and effective action to correct attendance if it falls below a certain level.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and the school must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child (where 5 or more days of unauthorised absence are recorded as a result).

The DfE have not provided any guidelines as to what they would consider to be exceptional circumstances. This is solely at the discretion of the headteacher. Where possible, families of schools should look to have a consistent approach to all leave of

absence requests – to try to ensure that requests for siblings who attend different schools are met with the same response by each headteacher who receives a request.

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence recorded. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures

School

- Electronic registration system (SIMs) used to record attendance
- Registration periods operate between 8.55am-9.30am and 1.10pm-2.00pm. Children not present during these periods will be marked as absent in the register. Any child arriving at school in the morning after 9.05am but not later than 9.30am will be recorded as 'late'.
- First day contact is operated: parents/carers are responsible for informing the school if their child is going to be absent that day/session by telephone (leaving a message on the school's voicemail system if the phone is not answered). They are also required to give a valid reason for the absence e.g illness
- The school reserves the right to use sanctions for internal truancy at its discretion
- The school will address poor attendance prior to referral to Education Welfare Service through contact by a Family Support Worker. This may be a telephone call, a letter or sometimes an invitation to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns
- Arrangements for re-integration following periods of absence may be made, depending on the length of time of absence and the overall attendance pattern to date

Parents/carers

- Responsible for contacting the school to inform them of absence, by telephone (leaving a message on the voicemail system if the call is not answered). Also required to provide a valid reason for the absence
- Parents should be made aware that, where a child appears to be having an unacceptable level of absence due to medical reasons, the school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards or prescribed medication) be provided to cover all absences. Failure on the part of the parent to provide such medical evidence, will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised and referral to the Education Welfare Service will be considered.
- Parents and carers must only request leave if there are exceptional circumstances as family holidays will NOT be authorised under any circumstances

- Parents and carers are expected to work with the school and/or Education Welfare Service to resolve any attendance issues

Pupils

- There is an expectation that they attend regularly and are on time for registration and lessons
- Where pupils are found to be frequently late for the start of lessons then parents/carers will be contacted and a meeting or conversation held (with the pupil) to resolve the issues

Education Welfare Service (EWS)

- Works within 4 quadrant based Area Attendance Teams to reduce persistent absence, improve overall attendance and give advice and support to children, families and schools.
- Carries out statutory duties on behalf of the Local Authority to ensure parents/carers fulfil their legal requirements in relation to school attendance

The school may refer a pupil to Education Welfare Service where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. The EWS will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

Rewards/Celebrations

We place value on the good attendance of all pupils, but are also mindful that some pupils are not able to achieve this through no fault of their own (ie. for a prolonged period of illness). We may decide to use any of the following, where appropriate, to celebrate and reward good attendance:

- An 'attendance mascot' that moves weekly to the classroom where the form/tutor group with 'best attendance in the school' is registered each morning
- Headteacher meets with and congratulates each student that has 98-100% attendance at the end of each term

Evaluation and Review

The school will review this policy *annually* and update it accordingly to include changes in the law and guidance on good practice. The policy will be promoted throughout the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.