

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## QUEEN BOUDICA COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:

Resources Committee  
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### ISSUE AND REVISION RECORD

<u>Date</u>	<u>Issue No.</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Review Date</u>
April 2009	01	Original	April 2009
September 2014	02	Numerous Changes	September 2017
February 2018	03	Numerous changes including inclusion of Holidays During Term time	February 2021

## Statement of Intent/Mission Statement

At Queen Boudica Primary School all children enjoy an education which helps them to fulfil their potential, discover their talents and instils in them a lifelong love of learning. We also want children to become independent and be able to make a positive contribution to the community. We actively promote the British values including tolerance and mutual respect. Alongside this, we believe that developing children's self-esteem and confidence is fundamental to their learning. In addition, of course we are committed to ensuring that every child achieves the highest possible academic standards.

### Working together our vision will be realised through:

- Providing a safe, caring, stimulating and innovative learning environment.
- Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and co-operation.
- Encouraging children to learn actively with and from each other.
- Enabling every child to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
- High expectations reached through challenging, creative and purposeful learning experiences.
- Enabling every child to experience success and develop a joy for learning.
- Equipping children with skills for life in a rapidly changing society.
- Promoting personal, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- Encouraging tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions so that children appreciate and respect their own and other cultures.
- Developing close and supportive links with the community.

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, striving to achieve at least the National Average\* of 96% of higher (\*as at Feb 18). We take swift and effective action to correct attendance if it falls below a certain level.

## School Attendance. Our Expectations and the Law

Good and punctual attendance from day one is expected, and vital, to children getting the very best from their education. The impact of a missed lesson or loss of a full days learning should never be underestimated. If they have missed it, they have not learnt it.

All parents are required to, as part of the schools pre admission procedures, complete a New Pupil Record (see appendix ...) whereby they read and sign statements to acknowledge their acceptance and understanding of each of the statements.

### Medical Appointments:

Routine medical appointments such as surgery visits, eye tests and dental check-ups should be made outside of the normal school day, at weekends or during school holidays. Evidence of an appointment will always be requested.

### Term Time Holidays:

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 removed all references to 'family holidays'. Leave of absence may only be granted by a headteacher if there are exceptional circumstances. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school, including weekends and school holidays, to spend time together. Taking a child out of school during term time could be detrimental to the child's

educational progress. There is no entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time; however, an application may be submitted to the school, in writing via the schools 'Application for Term Time Leave of Absence' form (see appendix ...) if parents/carers believe there are exceptional circumstances. Where a family chooses to go on holiday during term time, and the reasons stated are not deemed to be of 'exceptional' circumstance, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code).

All unauthorised holidays taken (that meet the required criteria as set by Essex County Council) will be subject to an Missing Education and Child Employment Service (MECES) issued (via the school or their external attendance monitors, Attendance Solutions) penalty notice of £60, to each parent, for each child, to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid to Essex County Council within the required time-scale, the penalty will increase to £120 for each parent, for each child. If no payment has been made within 28 days parents may be prosecuted for the offence and could be subject to a fine of up to £2500. Payment of a penalty notice enables parents to discharge the offence.

### **Absences:**

Should a child need to be absent from school due to a valid absence reason, parents are required, by law, to inform the school daily of the reason. The school request you do this by 10am. Failure to do so may result in the absence being record as an 'O' coded unauthorised absence. The Education (Pupil Registration) England Regulations 2006 clearly state that where a parent provides a reason for absence, it is the school, not the parent that decides whether or not the absence(s) in question are recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Changes to the Essex Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices from the 1st October 2017 state that:-

- A penalty notice may be issued if 10 unauthorised absences have occurred during a 10 week period
- A penalty notice may be issued if there are 6 or more unauthorised sessions (3 days) due to a holiday during the first two weeks of September.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 Section 23(1) enables penalty notices to be issued to parents if their child has irregular school attendance. A penalty notice enables the parent to discharge the offence.

### **Punctuality:**

The school gates are opened at 8:40am, children must be through the gates by 8.55am, when the gates will be locked, allowing time for pupils to make their way around to their classroom ready for a prompt 9am registration. Those arriving later than 8.55am will need to come into school via the front entrance and will be marked in the register as 'Late' from 9am.

Punctuality monitoring, forms an important part of our half termly attendance reviews. Persistent lateness will result in a request to attend a School Attendance Meeting with Attendance Solutions and, if improvements are not noted, a penalty notice may be issued by MECES for 'failing to ensure your child attends school regularly'.

### **Foundation Stage Admission: -**

Children do not (legally) have to attend full time education until the term after their 5th birthday. By choosing to take up a full time place offered at Queen Boudica, families of Foundation Stage pupils are agreeing to adhere to the same Attendance and Punctuality Policy as the rest of the school from the moment of joining us.

### **For your information:-**

- New legislation came into force from September 2018 whereby Penalty Notices can be issued to parents/carers of any pupils that have 6 sessions (3days) or more of unauthorised absences recorded during the first two weeks of September. Queen Boudica Primary School will be enforcing these Penalty Notices to discourage absences at this vital, start of new academic year, time.
- It is a parental responsibility, as prescribed within Section 7 and Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that children attend school punctually and regularly. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.
- The Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school”.
- A pupil falls into the Governments ‘Persistent Absentee’ category when their attendance falls below 90%. To be classed as persistently absent a child will have missed 19+ days (38 sessions) over the 6 half terms of the school year.
- The Essex Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices can be reviewed at:- [https://www.essex.gov.uk/Publications/Documents/Code\\_Conduct.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/Publications/Documents/Code_Conduct.pdf)
- 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.
- 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, Missing Education and Child Employment Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

## **Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures**

### **The School**

- The school uses an electronic registration system, SIMs to record attendance.
- The Schools registration periods operate between 8.55am-9.30am and 1.10pm-1.45pm. Children not present during these periods will be marked as absent in the register. Any child arriving at school after 9am, missing the prompt 9am registration, but not later than 9.30am will be recorded as an ‘L’ coded late. Those arriving after 9.30am will be coded dependant on the reason provided by the parent/carer.
- Where no reason for an absence has been provided by a pupils parent/carer the school will send a text message (between 9.30am and 10.15am) to the child’s ‘Priority One’ contact informing them that their child is absent from school and that a valid absence reason is required. Code ‘N’ is used on the register until a valid reason has been provided. If, by the end of the school day no valid reason has been provided the absence will be amended to ‘O’ code - unauthorised.

## **Parents/carers**

- Parents/carers are responsible for informing the school by 10am on each day that their child is going to be absent from school. A message should be left on the school's voicemail system if the phone is not answered. A valid reason for the absence must be left along with the child's name and class. Please note that 'unwell' is not sufficient, a condition should be detailed.
- Parents should be made aware that, where a child appears to be having a high 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 a request to attend a school attendance meeting (either via telephone or face to face) with Attendance Solutions may be issued. Failure to act, or improve on, concerns raised may then result in onward referral to County's Missing Education and Child Employment Service.
- Written requests for leave of absence should only be submitted by parents and carers where exceptional circumstance exists. Family holidays are rarely authorised and (if unauthorised) always referred to MECES for the issue of Penalty Notices.
- If a child arrives at school late they must be brought to the school office by a parents or carer. They should NOT be allowed to come into school on their own. In all cases of lateness a reason is required and recorded on the child's attendance recorded along with the number of minutes late.
- Parents and carers are expected to work with the school, Attendance Solutions and/or MECES to resolve any attendance concerns.

## **Pupils**

- Via newsletter content, assemblies and class discussions pupils will be reminded of the importance of good attendance and punctuality as well as the negative impact lateness and absence can have on their ability to reach their full potential.
- Where pupils are found to be frequently late for the start of lessons an explanation will be sought and then, if deemed necessary, parents/carers may also be contacted and required to attend a meeting alongside their child to resolve the issues.

## **Attendance Solutions**

The school employs a third party, Attendance Solutions Essex, to support the school in the monitoring of, and acting on, attendance issues and concerns.

Attendance Solutions study the schools data (alongside school staff) on a half-termly basis and then, as deemed necessary, contact parents and carers to raise any concerns noted. Contact will be made via the telephone or by letter. They conduct all School Attendance Meetings on behalf of the school.

## **Missing Education and Child Employment Service (MECES)**

The school may refer a pupil to MECES where attendance remains a concern following school and/or Attendance Solutions intervention. MECES 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 therefore celebrate good attendance via:-

- The Schools Purple Pal mascots are awarded each Friday during the schools weekly celebration assembly to the Early Years/KS1 and KS2 class that has achieved the highest attendance that week.
- Each class's attendance is published on an 'Attendance Monitor' table on the schools weekly newsletter. The data shown includes that week's attendance %, number of absences and instances of lateness. Each class's attendance is then colour coded depending on the % achieved.

**Gold = 98 -100%, Green = 95 – 97.9%, Grey = 91 – 94.9%, Blue = 85 – 90.9%, Red = <84.9%**

We may also choose to implement additional ways of celebrating group and individual's attendance achievements.

## **Evaluation and Review**

The school will review this policy every three years 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.