



**QUEST**  
**PRIMARY**

LEARNING CHANGES LIVES

**Attendance Policy**

Approved by the  
Primary Learning and Quality committee  
September 2022

Next review  
September 2024

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

- DfE- 'Working together to improve school attendance'- May 22

## **Aims**

Quest Primary expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, always.

We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. The Collegiate Trust's target for attendance is 96%. At Quest Primary we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.

### **We aim to:**

- ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality and support for those who are finding this more difficult.
- raise academic standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- ensure all stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- work with external agencies, to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.
- provide information about the range of support services that parents can access.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

There are legal obligations on:

- Parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise and to send them to school regularly once they are on the register.
- The school to register attendance and notify the local authority of absence from school.
- The local authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

### **The school will be responsible for:**

- The overall management and implementation of the policy.
- Dealing with parental requests for extended leave in line with Croydon Local Authority policies and procedures.
- Considering the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Croydon Local Authority policies and procedures. Working with and supporting families including signposting and referring to outside agencies.

### **Parents are expected to:**

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform.
- Arrange medical and dental appointments outside of school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child and each day thereafter, providing an explanation of absence.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may have an impact on learning.

## Absences

If a child is unable to come to school, it is the parents' responsibility to notify the school by 9am on the first day of absence and everyday thereafter by ringing **02086574722** and leaving a message on the school answer phone. When leaving a message please be specific about why your child is absent (e.g. tonsillitis/vomiting) and the child's name and class. **Please note teachers are unable to pass absence messages on.**

**There are two types of absences: authorised and unauthorised.**

An authorised absence includes: illness, medical appointments, religious observance.

All other authorised absences are at the Head of School's discretion.

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing.

An unauthorised absence includes but is not limited to:

- a birthday/wedding/ or similar;
- sibling/parent illness (unless under special circumstance);
- holidaying during term time (unless agreed by the local authority and school);
- your child is on antibiotics (the school office can administer antibiotics on prescription that are required to be taken 4 times daily);
- absence of 5 or more days without medical evidence;
- any absence not agreed by the school;
- and any absence not reported on the morning of the first day and any subsequent day.

Remember you can help your child attend regularly by:

- Making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Taking an interest in their education - ask about schoolwork and encourage them to get involved in school activities.
- Discussing any problems they may have at school - inform their teacher or whoever oversees attendance at the school about anything serious.
- Not letting them take time off school for minor ailments - particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work.
- Arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays to prevent disruption to your child's education and to the school. Pupils should be brought back to school after appointments. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.

If a child has a minor illness e.g., mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they do not get any better, school will contact parents, to collect them.

Should your child be off for an extended period for a planned medical procedure please let the office know the expected duration and provide a copy of the medical letters. If you know that your child will be absent from school a "Leave of Absence Form" can be collected from the school office or downloaded from the school website. This needs to be filled in and returned to the school office, in advance of the absence. All other absences are unauthorised. Holidays taken in term time will not be authorised and can lead to a fine.

Unexplained absence from school is regarded as a safeguarding issue and the Educational Welfare Officer will be notified if there is no response to a query regarding a child's absence.

## Absence due to Illness

Communication: Working in partnership with parents.

All parents are asked to contact the school by 9:00am on the first day of absence and maintain contact with the school throughout the absence. If no notification is received about a child's absence, then a member of the school's administration team will phone you to establish the reason for the absence. If we are unable to reach you or there is no response, absences will be unauthorised and our EWO may be notified. It is a school's decision

whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' note explaining that their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern. In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested, however, schools can challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance. Sickness that continues over 5 days may require a letter from the GP depending on the circumstances. Persistent absence/illness may also lead to a request for medical evidence. If the school is satisfied that a pupil is absent because of illness, the absence will be treated as authorised. The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 90%.
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness.
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.

### **Is my child too ill for school?**

When your child is unwell, it can be hard deciding whether to keep them off school. These simple guidelines should help. Not every illness needs to keep your child from school. If you keep your child away from school, be sure to inform the school on the first day of their absence. Use common sense when deciding whether your child is too ill to attend school.

Ask yourself the following questions.

- Is my child well enough to do the activities of the school day? If not, keep your child at home.
- Does my child have a condition that could be passed on to other children or school staff? If so, keep your child at home.
- Would I take a day off work if I had this condition? If so, keep your child at home.

### **Medical and Dental Appointments**

Parents/carers should make dental/doctor appointments for after school hours or during the school holidays. If it is within school hours that cannot be avoided, we will require proof of appointment. Leave for medical or dental appointments will be authorised where confirmation has been received from the parents [either in person, telephone call or writing]. The child should attend school before/after the appointment depending on the time of the appointment. For example, if the child has an appointment at 10am, we expect them to be returned to school after this.

### **Requests for leave of absence** (exceptional circumstances)

Holidays taken during term time are strongly discouraged and schools can only agree to absence if they believe there are exceptional circumstances that warrant it. All leave of absence requests will therefore be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional.

A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (available from the school office) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required. The Head of School will only authorise a request in exceptional circumstances, and for a maximum 5 days during the child's whole school career. Whilst the Head of school will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

- No holidays will be authorised during the month of May in Years 1-6 and June for Year 1 and Year 4 due to National Tests.
- The Head of School will consider requests for absence due to public performance participation such as performing with a local orchestra or as part of a film or television production. The pupil must then acquire a license from the local authority.
- Pupils with medical needs are considered individually; the school will liaise with parents and medical staff to support the child's education.
- Holidays taken owing to close familial bereavement abroad will be considered sympathetically.

If the Head of School deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a reply confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer.

If the Head of School deems that the reasons are not exceptional the leave of absence will not be authorised.

A reply informing the parents/carers of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence being taken will be sent to each parent/carer. This may result in the local authority issuing a Penalty Notice (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days). If this penalty is not paid, the local authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

## Children Missing from Education

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. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.

Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education.

## Attendance Statistics

<b>Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year:</b> Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.
<b>95%: 10 days absence a year:</b> These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2-week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.
<b>90%: 19 days absence a year:</b> Young people in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.
<b>85%: 29 days absence a year:</b> The Government classes young people in this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by the local authority.

## Punctuality

Being on time is also especially important. When children are late for school, they are not only missing valuable learning time but coming in late disrupts the class. For some children who are persistently late this can be an embarrassing experience. Children can come into school from 8.30 a.m. and go straight into their classrooms. The student gates close at 8.45 a.m. We also have our Breakfast Club, where children can be dropped off from 7:30am, bookable via Parent Pay.

If your child is late for school, they must be signed in at the main office and a reason should be provided for the lateness.

Children arriving after 8.45 a.m. will be marked Late. If your child arrives after 9.15 a.m. they will receive an Unauthorised mark for the morning session. U marks count towards your child's attendance percentage.

If your child is late for school, they must be signed in at the main office and a reason should be provided for the lateness.

If your child is late more than five times during half a term, you will be invited to attend a meeting. Depending on the occurrence, this may also include our Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). Persistent lateness after 9:15am will be monitored and may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice and fine by the local authority.

5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost a year
10 minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year
15 minutes late every day = 10 days of school lost a year
20 minutes late every day = 13 days of school lost a year
30 minutes late every day = 19 days of school lost a year

## End of the school day and clubs

School finishes at 3.10 p.m. for Infants and 3.15 p.m. for Juniors. For different but equally important reasons your child should be collected on time. Waiting and not knowing why parents are late can cause anxiety for children especially when they observe that every member of the class has been collected.

If your child is not collected after 15 minutes past the end of the school day (3.30pm) they will be sent to after-school provision (Club Q). Here you will incur the after-school club fees and your ParentPay account will be charged accordingly (£5 until 4.30 and £10 thereafter until 6pm)

### After school club

Children should be picked up promptly from after-school clubs and booster classes. The same fees will apply to those sent to after school club, Club Q, due to late collection.

## Rewards for Excellent Attendance

To improve punctuality and attendance we reward pupils and whole classes by:

- Issuing 100% attendance certificates termly
- ½ termly treat with the Head of School for the top 10 children
- Issuing certificates to those pupils who have improved attendance
- Allocating points in the attendance league- winning house to celebrate at the end of the academic year
- Recognising and publicising winning classes on class dojo, whole school display board and in celebration assemblies
- Awarding the class with the top attendance of the week, the school attendance trophy

## Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)

It is the duty of schools to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of pupils. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places the duty on schools to make arrangements to ensure functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

The school works very closely with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Referrals are made to EWO when the school is concerned about high levels of absence and persistent lateness. The Local Authority may in cases of unacceptable unauthorised absence, issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or enforce attendance. Please be aware that legal measures may be taken against you.

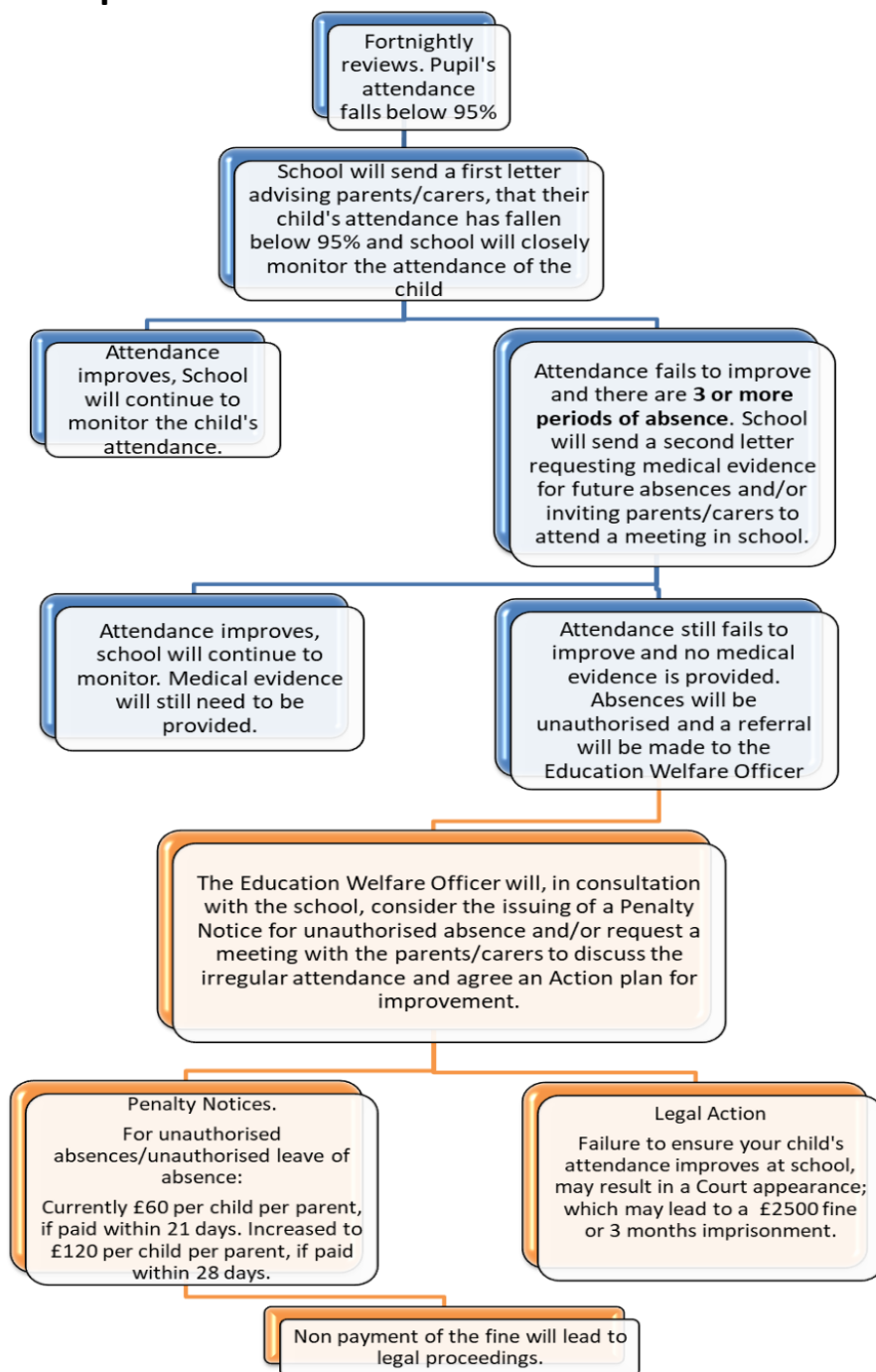
A FPN is a fine. Parents who are issued with a FPN will be expected to pay a fine of £60 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid within 14 days, it will increase to £120 per parent, per child.

Every attempt will be made by the school to work in partnership with you to ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time. The Attendance Officer/Member of the Senior Leadership Team will arrange to meet with parents to discuss attendance issues to improve the child's attendance.

However, if there is not an improvement in your child's attendance/ time keeping then the school will refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service.

This is a route we wish to avoid. Warning letters will be sent to parents/carers before this happens. Should you have any concerns regarding this please contact the school to arrange a meeting and we will be pleased to meet with you to help.

## Absence procedure



## Responsibility- Attendance Champion

Mrs Louise Childs- (Learning coach- Attendance)

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

*Please complete and return it to the school office at least 2 weeks before planned absence in order for the request to be processed.*

NAME OF CHILD \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

First day of absence \_\_\_\_\_

Last day of absence \_\_\_\_\_

Number of days \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain reason for request or attach a separate letter:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## OFFICE USE ONLY:

The absence is authorised?

This absence is unauthorised? (as it does not comply with our Attendance Policy)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

J Stawman (Head of School)

Date \_\_\_\_\_