QMHS Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2025-2026

Date: December 2025	
Review Date: **This policy will be reviewed according to The Mercian Trust's Policy Schedule. If there are any changes in legislation or legal requirements, an earlier review will be conducted to ensure compliance and relevance**	
Adopted by governing body on:	2nd December 2025
Distribution Essential reading for: Information for:	 Teaching and support staff Parents and pupils

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1. Aims, rationale and principles

1.1 Aims

The governors at Queen Mary's High School are committed to providing a full and effective education for all our students and meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Promoting and supporting punctuality to attending lessons

The school will do all it can to ensure that every student attends to their fullest and that any problems which impede this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible.

1.2 Rationale

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to enable all students to gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities provided throughout their education. Improving attendance and punctuality is a vital element of school improvement and as research indicates, positively impacts on the levels of achievement of students.

1.3 Principles

We believe a positive attendance and punctuality culture is more likely to be achieved when all partners co-operate with each other.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school and acting as the senior attendance champion
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Ensure that the school deals discretely and properly with any problem notified to the school by the parent
- Liaising with the Local Authority's Allocated Attendance Officer (AO)

3.4 The school attendance officer

The School attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 8)
- 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 the Local Authority's allocated attendance officer to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Ensuring that every reasonable effort to contact the parent when their child fails to attend school without good reason is completed
- Complete first day calling and follow up on any attendance concerns raised
- Complete welfare follow up calls to students who are or who have been absent
- Transfer calls from parents to the head of year or pastoral support staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance where appropriate

- Record late arrival accurately on Go4Schools and ensure that the school's consequences policy is followed with regard to the allocation of consequence points and tracking of time missed in school
- Ensuring there are no missing marks on the registers

3.5 Form tutors and class teachers

Form tutors and class teachers are responsible for:

- Accurately recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this on Go4Schools at the beginning of every session. This is an essential part of our safeguarding responsibilities
- Both challenge and offer support to students who are regularly late and ensure they are aware of the school expectations and the rationale for them
- Record late arrival accurately on Go4Schools and ensure that the school's consequences policy is followed with regard to the allocation of consequence points and the tracking of time missed in school

3.6 School admin/reception staff

School admin/reception staff are responsible for assisting with:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Completion of first day calling and follow up on any attendance concerns raised
- Completion of welfare follow up calls to students who are or who have been absent
- Transferring calls or information from parents to the head of year or pastoral support staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance where appropriate
- Record late arrival accurately on Go4Schools and ensure that the school's consequences policy is followed with regard to the allocation of consequence points and tracking of time missed in school

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Making sure their child attends every day and is in their form room by 8.45am. We request for students to be in their form room by 8.40am for a prompt start at 8.45am
- Calling the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and providing a reason for their absence
- Calling school on each subsequent day of absence, and advising the school of when they are expected to return
- **Providing the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child**
- Ensuring that their children arrive in school fully prepared and ready for the school day and provide the school with up to date home, work and emergency contact numbers
- Not arranging family holidays during the school term
- Ensuring that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Informing the school, in confidence, about any problem which might affect their child's attendance or behaviour
- Providing medical evidence for any appointments that do need to be taken during the school day
- Attending a reintegration meeting following an absence of more than 5 days

3.8 Students
Students are responsible for:

- Attending school regularly and to arrive on time and be in form rooms by 8.40am for a prompt start at 8.45am
- Acting with kindness, integrity and good manners if they need to sign in late due to extenuating circumstances
- Telling a member of staff about any valid problem which is making it hard for them to attend school regularly and on time. We will be able to offer support.
- Be ready, kind and responsible in preparedness for the school day ahead.

4. Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

Our policy is to place more emphasis on rewards rather than consequences although we recognise that in a minority of cases effective consequences are necessary. We will encourage good attendance by:

- following-up absence on the first day where possible
- undertaking attendance checks at appropriate times
- recording good attendance on students' records, e.g. school report and UCAS references
- acknowledging individual's improvements in attendance
- providing feedback on individual attendance data to students and, where necessary, parents
- encouraging informal liaison between the school, local authority allocated Attendance Officer (AO) and other agencies wherever necessary
- welcoming and supporting children returning to school after a long term absence and, where necessary, provide support in catching up on any significant gaps from missed learning
- reward attendance for individual students on a termly and annual basis
- encouraging improvement
- collecting data on attendance for the whole school and by year group and making this available to governors and to parents
- emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance during the induction process for new students

5. Supporting pupils with medical conditions

If a student is unable to attend school for a period of time due to a long term illness or medical condition, the school will liaise with the family to ensure appropriate work is set. In some cases, this may need liaison with alternative educational providers.

The return to school and the reintegration of a pupil who returns to the school after a lengthy absence requires special planning. The Head of Year (HoY) and SENDCo will be responsible for deciding upon the programme for return and for the management of the programme.

Staff will be notified of the return of a long-term absentee and consult with individual staff as appropriate.

6. Recording Attendance

6.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register

- We 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 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.

We will also take a lesson register at the start of each lesson. This will ensure we can keep all children safe and take account for their location on the school site.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made
- It is expected that students arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day and be in their form room to start their school day at 8.45am. If a pupil arrives after 8.45am they will sign in with a member of the SLT on the SLT late gate and be questioned on their reason for being late. They will then sign in at reception using our Inventry system where the number of minutes late will be accurately recorded
- The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 2pm by the period 5 subject teacher

6.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer 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. Please call the school office on 01922 721013 or email qmhs-attendance@qmhs.merciantrust.org.uk. Please leave a message with your child's name and form, and the reason for the absence.

The school should be notified immediately in cases of infectious disease.

Any messages will most likely be followed up with a welfare phone call from the attendance officer or a member of the pastoral support team.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this. Further action may be taken by the local authority's allocated Attendance Officer where necessary.

6.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This should be provided to the school in writing.
We encourage parents/carers 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. If a child attends school in a morning and then has to leave for a medical or dental appointment they will still get their attendance mark.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 7 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

6.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. The number of minutes late will be recorded. Once a pupil has accrued 30 minutes of late attendance they will be required to make up this time in an after school catch up session. Parents will be informed of when this session will take place in advance
- In the event that students are persistently late without good reason they will be required to spend their break or lunch time with the attendance officer or a member of senior staff. This will usually happen after 5 lates where no evidence of extenuating circumstances has been provided.
- After the register has closed at 9.15am the student will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. This will remain as an absent code. We therefore encourage parents to ensure students are in school on time and that any medical appointments are not scheduled to impact on a punctual arrival to school
- If punctuality issues persist after the first 30 minutes catch up session parents will be invited to attend a meeting so next steps to improve punctuality can be discussed and agreed upon

6.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer 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 will arrange for a home visit to be made or ask the police to conduct a safe and well check
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving legal action with support from the Local Authority

6.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels three times a year in a progress report. Parents can also check their child's attendance at any time by logging on to their Go4Schools account and will be able to access this via the Go4Schools app. If parents are not able to log onto their Go4Schools account please get in touch with school for some help with this.

7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

7.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school does consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the Parent section on the school website. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and
- Attending medical/dental appointments that cannot take place out of school hours
- 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
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Attending a funeral (1 day)
- Representation in sporting, music or drama performance (or similar) at an elite level
- Sitting an external examination and brief study leave for an external examination

7.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

The school will follow Walsall Local Authorities Local Code of Conduct guidance when looking to impose a Fixed Penalty Notice.

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

In line with our positive community ethos and our Be Ready, Be Kind and Be Responsible mantra we believe in celebrating and promoting success. Students who achieve between 98% and 100% will be recognised by the school and receive achievement points and termly certificates.
Students with an excellent attendance and punctuality record are sought after by employers and Higher Education institutions, it is therefore essential that a good attitude towards attendance is promoted by the school.

9. Attendance monitoring

Whilst promoting the importance of regular attendance at school to ensure that the learning experiences and preparedness for the workplace are instilled, we are also very much aware of the different circumstances some students may be facing. Where there is a concern regarding a student's welfare due to their low attendance, we will seek help from our Early Help partners to support parents to ensure their child is able to access their right to education.

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data at least half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence 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 compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

Examine historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to heads of year and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

9.4 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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Send warning letters to parents when their child reaches 95% attendance and then again at 90% attendance
- Hold pupil meetings with support from the Local Authority when necessary
- Devise an attendance contract to help improve attendance when necessary

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the school. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Local Governing Board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Rewards, behaviour and consequences policy

Appendix 1: Attendance and absence codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance that were updated for implementation from September 2024.

Category	Code	Description	Statistical Meaning
Attending the School	**/**	Present at school - Morning Session.	Attending
	****	Present at school - Afternoon Session.	Attending
	L	Late arrival before the register is closed.	Attending
Attending a place other than the school	**K**	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority. (School will also record the nature of the educational activity).	Attending approved education activity
	V	Attending an educational visit or trip.	Attending approved education activity
	P	Participating in a sporting activity.	Attending approved education activity
	W	Attending work experience.	Attending approved education activity
	B	Attending any other approved educational activity. (School will also record the nature of the educational activity).	Attending approved education activity
	D	Dual registered at another school	Not counted as a possible session
Absent - Leave of Absence	**C1**	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence

	M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence
	J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.	Authorised absence
	S	Leave of absence for the purposed of studying for a public examination.	Authorised absence
	X	Non -compulsory school age pupil not required to attend.	Not counted as a possible session
	C2	Leave of absence for compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.	Authorised absence
	C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances	Authorised absence
Absent - other authorised reasons	**T**	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence
	R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
	I	Illness	Authorised absence
	E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised absence
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	**Q**	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements	Not counted as a possible session
	Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not counted as a possible session
	Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not counted as a possible session
	Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not counted as a possible session
	Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectantly closed	Not counted as a possible session
	Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not counted as a possible session
	Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not counted as a possible session
	Y7	Unable to attend because of any unavoidable cause. (School will also record the nature of the unavoidable cause).	Not counted as a possible session
Absent - unauthorised absence	**G**	Holiday not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence
	N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised absence
	O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence
	U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised absence
Administrative codes	**Z**	Pupil's name entered in advance of start date	N/A
	#	Planned whole school closure - no session to take place	N/A