

QUINTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Mission statement

Quinton Primary School aims to maximise attendance rates in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

Statutory framework

Under the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

Rights and responsibilities

Improving attendance at Quinton Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – governors, pupils, parents and all the staff.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support from the class teacher. At the end of the term, pupils whose attendance is either very good or vastly improved will be presented with an award certificate during the celebration assembly.

Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents must notify the school **as soon as possible on the first day of absence** – by phone call, in writing or via e-mail. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent/carer. Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance with percentage attendance detailed. Parents should try to avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

School

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of **all** school staff. The school employs a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to absenteeism firmly and consistently.

Registration

Children may arrive at school from 8.40am There is no supervision on site for children before this time and the school is not legally responsible for them. Registration is called and recorded at 9.00 am and after lunch at 1.15 pm .

Registers will close ten minutes after registration times. If a pupil fails to arrive before registers close they will be marked 'absent'.

The teacher will subsequently amend the register entry to read 'late'. If a pupil is persistently late, the headteacher/school office will contact the parents.

The school will monitor minutes late and pupils who are persistently late will be referred to Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS).

Monitors will take the registers to the classes and return them to the office before and after each registration. In the event of a fire, the teacher/office staff will bring registers to the fire assembly point.

Authorised and unauthorised attendance

Absence can only be **authorised** if:

- The pupil was ill or 'prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause'
- 'the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong'
- there is a family bereavement
- the pupil is attending an interview for a place at another school
- the pupil is attending a pupil reintegration unit
- the pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. attending graduation of older sibling)
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA for any of the following:
 - the child's transport to and from school
 - boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school
 - enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents and conditions stated in the Education Act 1006 Section 444 (6) are met

Absence is **unauthorised** if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or look after a sibling (absence should only be granted in exceptional circumstances)
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasion (e.g. birthday)
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday for a period of time longer than that negotiated with the school
- the pupil is on family holiday without permission (or exceptional circumstances have not been agreed by the headteacher)

The codes for absences are included in each register.

Leave of Absence

The Government have issued updated guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities in July 2019.

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- The application must come from the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and before any arrangements are confirmed or money committed. Requests can be made using the request form available in reception. Failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Procedures for following up absence

- First day absence: the secretary or teacher will make a telephone call to parents if possible
- If a pupil is absent for more than 3 consecutive days (without an explanation), or returns to school without an explanation, a written request for an explanation will be sent home for parents to return to school accounting for the absence
- If a pupil is persistently (or intermittently) absent, parents will be invited to attend a meeting at school with the class teacher and headteacher
- If a pupil is persistently late and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to WAS.
- Notes from parents will be initialled by the class teacher and put in the register then sent to the office where they will be placed on file.
- N.B. Pupils who are absent because they are unwell are not expected to complete homework as it usually extends or reinforces class work.

Strategies for promoting attendance

- Quinton Primary School offers an environment in which pupils feel welcomed and valued. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken
- Every effort will be made to match learning tasks to pupils' needs
- Attendance data will be collated termly and analysed every 4 weeks, in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, parents' evenings etc) of the importance of good attendance and the potential for fines for unauthorised absence.
- The headteacher makes a half-termly report to governors on attendance
- Class teachers, SENCo and the headteacher will liaise with other agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing difficulties
- Reception and Year 6 teacher will make links with feeder schools to ensure a smooth transfer. Discussions will identify those pupils who may require extra support during this process.
- If a child's attendance drops below 95 %, a formal letter will be sent home.
- The school works closely with WAS and has developed a series of letters to be sent home in the event of absences.

Targets

Attendance target is 97+%. To put this into context across one school year:

Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance

14 days absence = 92.6% attendance

20 days absence = 89.4% attendance

30 days absence = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.