

Person responsible for the Policy:	Fiona Moores
Date Approved:	September 2024
Date for Review:	September 2025

Changes since last review	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fixed penalty notices increased from £60 to 80 per pupil absence and £120 to £160 for fines paid after 21 days. - Added Appendix 5 Penalty notice information

Introduction
<p>The Quinta Primary School recognises the importance of good attendance and the significance of attendance on safeguarding, wellbeing and achievement.</p> <p>We aim to achieve excellent attendance for all pupils by operating an attendance policy within which pupils, staff, parents, the local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.</p> <p>All staff will encourage excellent attendance. Excellent attendance is seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.</p>

Key adults responsible for promoting excellent attendance at The Quinta	
Fiona Moores	Attendance Officer
William Sharpe	Designated Safeguard Lead

RATIONALE

- Regular attendance at school or alternative provision is a legal requirement and “The Education Act” 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent/carer to fail to secure their child’s regular attendance at school.
- Parent/carers/guardians have a legal duty as well as a moral obligation to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on time, on a regular and full-time basis.
- Good attendance and punctuality is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life.
- Safeguarding each child is everyone’s responsibility and a child may be at risk if they do not attend school regularly.
- Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Aims

- To create a culture in which good attendance is ‘normality’
- To demonstrate to pupils, parent(s), carer(s), guardian(s) and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions

Objectives

- To involve the children or young people more in their school attendance
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for children or young people’s attendance and for the school to recognise the importance of this role, especially with identifying first day absence of pupils.
- Effective working relationship with the Education Welfare Service
- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring information
- To discuss the settings of targets for the school with the EWO and the Governing Body as appropriate
- To ensure that such data collated on Arbor is used effectively by all staff in conjunction with the Head Teacher to address individual children’s needs where they fall below 90%.
- To keep parent(s), carer(s), guardian(s) and governors informed of policy and practice e.g. school website, school newsletter or seesaw. To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children.

Procedure:

- Children or young people are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:
 - - Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
 - - Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)
- It is expected that parent(s)/carer(s), guardian(s) will provide an explanation if the child or young person is absent **on the first day** the absence occurs. This can be by letter, telephone, text, personally at the office or by appointment.
- If contact explaining the child or young person’s absence fails to be made by parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian (s), then the school will contact the home by telephone on

the initial day and on each day thereafter until the unexplained absence is clarified.

This contact will be recorded within Arbor - the schools MIS System.

- The headteacher will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

What can parent(s)/carer(s) do to help?

- If your child is absent from school please contact the school **before 9am** (prior to the close of morning registration) on the day of absence so that we know your child is safe. If your child is likely to be absent for any length of time, (e.g. due to illness) please keep us informed, a **medical note will be requested if the absence is over a week.**
- Try to make appointments outside school time, appointment letters will be required if in the school day.
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary

Identification of Pupils Giving Cause for Concern & Referral

- Mrs F Moores monitors attendance regularly and has responsibility for identifying attendance concerns.
- If the class teacher has concerns around attendance they will raise this with Mrs Moores immediately.
- Mrs F Moores will contact parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) and follow this up with attendance letters (Appendix 1, as appropriate). The child's attendance will then be monitored to the end of the half term/term.
- If there is no improvement, over this time period, attendance letter 2 (Appendix 2) will be sent to parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s). Parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) will be invited into school if they wish to discuss any problems/issues their child/children may have with Mrs Moores and Mrs Massey (family help lead and deputy designated safeguard lead). At this point the case will be referred to the headteacher.
- If there is still no improvement, at this point, attendance letter 3 (Appendix 3) will be sent to parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s). This will inform them that the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. The referral to the Education Welfare Service will consist of the referral form (see Referral Form in Appendix 4), copies of all correspondence to parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) and a print out of the child or young person's attendance certificate from Arbor data base
- If attendance has improved to the end of half term/term, school will still continue to monitor attendance to ensure improvement is maintained.

Completing the Register

- The Governing Body is responsible for registering with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998
- Electronic registers can be printed out and kept in the same way as manual registers. **These are legal documents as is the electronic recording of attendance**
- The twice-daily requirement to register pupils formally receives children or young people from home **and is a legal requirement**
- Emphasis is placed on the accurate twice daily completion of registers by the class teachers in the classrooms.
- Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school
- Registers will be marked electronically.
- The register will be marked using the symbols advised by the Department of Education.

Lateness

School begins at 8.55am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. **The school gates are open from 8.45am onwards.** Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.

Pupils will be registered as 'Late' (L) if they arrive between 8:55 and 9:30.

Pupils arriving after 9:30 will be marked as absent (U) for the morning register. All pupils arriving after 8:55 MUST sign in using the signing in system in the school main reception area. .

The fact that the U code is classed as an unauthorised absence means that when it is used pupils are likely to be missing significant amounts of schooling putting their educational progress at risk. For this reason the use of this code will be considered as serious as any other unauthorised absence and will attract the interest of external agencies, including referral to the local authority attendance team and consideration of the use of legal measures. A parent or carer may be issued with a fixed penalty notice if their child has more than 10 late (L) or unauthorised (U) sessions.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken. See Identification of Pupils Giving Cause for Concern and Referrals – the same process will apply (See Appendix 1)

Leave of Absence during term time

Under the present legislation parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for a holiday. A request for leave of absence must still be completed by Parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s), these can be obtained from school and have to be requested, as they are not readily available. A request for a leave of absence **must** be made by the parent who the pupil normally resides with. A child or young person who is absent longer than 10 days after an agreed return date can legally be removed from the school roll and the parents/carers/guardian(s) may be liable to prosecution.

A child cannot have more than five days (10 Sessions) of unauthorised absence over the course of two consecutive half-terms. Fines may be issued by the Local Authority in these cases.

There may be exceptional circumstances where authorised leave of absence is granted, the headteacher and attendance officer will consider each case individually, taking into account a child or young person's overall attendance and the reason for the absence. The headteacher has been delegated this responsibility by the governing body.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

This is available from the School Office upon request. It must be completed in advance of the absence and returned to the school.

- It must clearly state on the form why it is necessary that this absence must be taken in term time.
- Lower cost holidays is not a reason.
- On receipt of the "Leave of Absence Request Form", you will be sent a response indicating whether the school authorises your request or not.

Reasons for not authorising it may include:-

- Unsatisfactory attendance
- Time of year, e.g. if pupils are sitting Public Examinations
- If leave of absence has already been authorised during the current academic year
- It is a holiday request and is in school term time
- There does not appear to be an exceptional circumstance surrounding the request

Examples of exceptional circumstances are seen to be:

- When a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue (evidence required)
- The wedding/funeral of an immediate family member or the birth of a sibling
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While decisions are to be made on a case by case basis, requests will ***normally be refused***.

If parents still decide to take their child out of school, then the absence will be coded as **“unauthorised”**. This may lead to the school referring the matter to the Local Authority requesting a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalties for unauthorised absence (See Appendix 5 for further information)		
Timeline	One child	Two Children
Paid within 21 days	£80 per parent as per the definition in the education act, section 576	£80 per child = £160 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£160 per parent	£160 per child = £320 per parent
After 28 days	A summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance	A summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance

Fixed Penalty Notices have been introduced as part of the Government's drive to improve attendance.

These measures are severe but we believe that regular and high attendance is in every pupil's best interests and helps to maximise their achievements and enjoyment of school.

This policy reflects accurately the current legislation including <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> and we have a duty to point this out to parents/carers/guardians.

Further details and background information can be found at the Cheshire East Council website – [Cheshire East Attendance Support](#).

LEAVING SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL HOURS

A child will only be permitted to leave school during school hours if permission has been sought and a parent, carer, guardian or designated person collects the child in person. You

will be asked to sign your child in/out of school accordingly for safeguarding and health and safety reasons.

- **The school aims to have ALL children or young people attending regularly and punctually and parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) need to know that should their child fail to attend in this way then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.**
- **Parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) need to be aware that Cheshire East Schools work in co-operation with the Education Welfare Service.**
- **Parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) need to be aware that Cheshire East Council in conjunction with Schools are operating Fixed Penalty Notices for non-attendance.**

In developing this Attendance Policy we have taken into account the fact that Cheshire East is an ethnically diverse community. The school has incorporated practice, which guards against disadvantaging any sections of the community. Improving the performance of underachieving pupils is a key priority. This aims to improve the attainment of minority pupils across Cheshire East. Schools are aware and take into account the need for all public authorities to re-examine and make changes to their practice in promoting genuine multi-racial partnership.

The school understands the need for on-going communication with parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) and pupils regarding this policy, particularly those new to the school.

MONITORING OF ATTENDANCE

Local Authority Monitoring of Attendance

There are a range of processes to support Local Authority monitoring of attendance:

- All schools have a statutory obligation to provide information about attendance to the LA and the DfE. This enables national comparisons.
- The development of Electronic Registration means that the Local Authority and DfE should be able to access attendance data centrally, and could therefore monitor trends.
- The Education Welfare Service monitors attendance on behalf of the Local Authority through regular meetings with school staff and regular register checks. This focuses particularly on children or young people with long-term absences, regular patterns of absence, the school's monitoring of student attendance at alternative provision such as college placements, return of children or young people after fixed term exclusions, admissions of children or young people for whom a place at the school has been agreed, children or young people cared for by the Local Authority.
- Monitoring of agreed School/Education Welfare Service School Action Plans to ensure priority concerns are effectively addressed. The Education Welfare Officer and school must regularly review the Action Plans jointly.
- Monitoring the use and success of legal action to enforce attendance.
- The Admissions Team has a protocol for referral to the Education Welfare Service of children or young people who, for whatever reason, are without a school place.

School Monitoring of Attendance

Every school must have a designated person responsible for attendance, and establish a routine that ensures that regular monitoring and review take place.

General

Frequency	Action
Daily	Class teacher has the initial responsibility for dealing with concerns.
Weekly	Action to be taken by the school with regard to children or young people whose absence is causing concern. Discussions with the Education Welfare Officer, who may be asked to intervene in cases where the school has not been able to ascertain reasons for absence, or where other concerns exist.

Specific

The Quinta Primary allocate overall responsibility for specific tasks to the Headteacher (the deputy in his absence) who works alongside the school's administration officer for attendance.

Group	Issues
Year Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare figures with those for other cohorts within the school • Consider attendance pattern over the year.
Class Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare group with others in the same year group • Consider if registration guidelines are being correctly applied • Consider the class teacher effect
Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for broken weeks – five separate one-day absences are more significant than a week's absence • Look for same day absence each week • Check reasons for absence • Check absence notes • Closely monitor vulnerable/"at risk" children or young people • Reward good/improved attendance • Report to Education Welfare Officer long-term absentees/those for whom no reason for absence has been received.

School Monitoring of Lateness

The major principles of any late monitoring system are:

- it should ensure everyone in school is recorded in case of fire
- it should not allow children or young people to come into school undetected especially if some form of same day contact is being made with absentees.

The School's signing in system:

- enables the school office to keep a record and monitor punctuality
- makes it difficult for a student to enter a classroom late without staff acknowledgement
- ensures all teachers are consistently and correctly coding registers.

Every Minute Counts

Lateness = Lost Learning (Figures below are calculated over a school year)	
5 minutes late each day	3 days lost!
10 minutes late each day	6.5 days lost!

15 minutes late each day	10 days lost!
20 minutes late each day	13 days lost!
30 minutes late each day	19 days lost!

Appendix 1

Notice to improve: Cause for concern - Attendance

Dear xxxxxx,

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school.

Their current monthly average attendance has fallen to xx%. Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on their academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Your child's attendance will be closely monitored over the next 4 weeks and I will be compiling a report to share with our headteacher.

The outcomes of the review may result in the following actions:

- No further action due to significant improvement
- a face to face meeting with myself (senior attendance officer)
- a face to face meeting with myself and the headteacher
- a referral to Cheshire East Welfare
- a fixed penalty notice

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Fiona Moores

Senior Attendance Officer

Appendix 2

Dear xxxxxx,

Despite my recent letter dated xx.xx.xx, your child's absence has not improved. Therefore I am now writing to issue a formal notice of attendance concern. Included in this letter are the findings from the recent review and the action plan we will be formulating.

It is imperative that xxxxxx attends school regularly as their social , emotional and academic development is significantly affected by poor absence.

[The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4 - 2013/14 academic year - GOV.UK](#)

Between the dates xxx - xxx your child's absence was xx%

Between the review period xx-xx your child's absence was xx%

As a result your child's overall absence is now xx%

I would like to invite you to a meeting within the next 10 days to discuss ways forward, identify ways to support you in improving your child's attendance and collaboratively develop an action plan to improve.

Please call the school as soon as possible to arrange a date for this meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Fiona Moores

Senior Attendance Officer

Dear Parent,

Further to my recent letter, continued monitoring shows that there has not been sufficient improvement in your child/children's attendance.

Unfortunately due to this, I will have to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer at Cheshire East Council

As I have previously explained, the aim is for all children to have at least 95% attendance.

It is important that your child attends school regularly in order to make good progress and to benefit from the opportunities that school offers.

It is also your legal duty to ensure your child's regular attendance at school and failure to this could result in legal action being taken against you.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Fiona Moores

Senior Attendance Officer

Child's Name _____ **Class** _____

Dear Parent,

Your child's punctuality is currently giving cause for concern.

Late arrivals at school result in children or young people missing the beginning of lessons and disturbing the rest of the class when they arrive. All children or young people are expected to arrive in school between (8:45am) and (8:55am) every day. Please make sure that your child arrives at the correct time.

We will continue to monitor punctuality, and hope to see an immediate and sustained improvement. If there are particular problems, which we might help with, please do not hesitate to contact either your child's teacher or myself.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Fiona Moores

Senior Attendance Officer



PENALTY NOTICE FINES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ARE CHANGING !

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force on 19 August 2024.

Penalty Notices will be issued for

Term time leave: Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days.

10 Sessions of Unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 week period: A Penalty Notices may be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in a 10 week period.

However, we retain the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the above thresholds.

Per Parent/Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will continue to be issued per parent per child. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance the fine will be charged at:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

(Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Second Offence

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first penalty notice, for either term time leave or irregular attendance the second penalty notice will be charged at:

£160 if paid within 28 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Third Offence

On the third time that an offence is committed within 3 years of the first penalty notice for either a term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued. The case may proceed to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000 or legal proceedings under Section 444 (1a) can include a fine of up to £2500.

