

QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL

School Attendance Policy

Revised February 2014

Attendance is directly linked to achievement. We work to ensure all students reach their potential therefore intervention regarding concerns about attendance is integral to the work of the Pastoral Team.

Introduction

Excellent attendance promotes excellent learning. Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

QEHS believe that regular school attendance is crucial to allowing children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

QEHS values all students. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to early identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

QEHS believe attendance is a shared responsibility, involving the whole school community and local community; our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a thread that runs through all aspects of school improvement, and is supported by our policies on safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour and discipline and inclusion policies. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

QEHS define our key levels of attendance as:

| Attendance | Description | Approx. days lost per year | Approx. weeks lost per year |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 98 – 100% | Excellent | 0 to 4 | Less than 1 |
| 95 – 98% | Good | 5 to 9 | 1 to 2 |
| 93 – 95% | Of concern | 10 to 13 | 2 to 3 |
| 85 – 93% | Unsatisfactory | 14 to 28 | 3 to 6 |
| Below 85% | Persistent Absence | More than 29 | More than 6 |

Principles

QEHS believe the following important principles underpin our approach to managing attendance:

- Students and parents/carers understand the issues and procedures for attendance and punctuality.
- All school staff, including governors, administrative and support staff understand the issues and procedures for attendance and punctuality
- Clear procedures for supporting students to come to school
- Attendance issues are addressed in the curriculum
- Parents/carers and students having the opportunity to raise concerns and share in addressing those concerns

- Allocating resources e.g. time, people, space to support the policy
- Rewarding students who have for good attendance and those who strive to improve their attendance
- Identifying patterns of absence and intervening early. Research shows patterns of attendance are established early in a school career. Children who miss significant amounts of their education in primary schools are more likely to truant later on. QEHS will work with the school partnership using data to identify students early.
- Sanctions for failing to ensure regular attendance are fully understood by the whole school community and parents/carers.

Rights/Roles/ Responsibilities

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Of students who miss more than 50% of school only 3% achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including Maths and English.

QEHS believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents/carers, students and the wider school community.

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents/carers.
- Have a named senior manager to lead on attendance (SAL) – at QEHS this is Diane Harris, Senior Deputy Headteacher, who co-ordinates the work of the Pastoral Team on attendance.
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body meetings.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority and DFE as required and on time.
- Have clear systems in school to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to develop strategies and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

A positive learning climate is essential for promoting good attendance

The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents/carers.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Make staff aware of the Attendance Policy and are adequately trained to address attendance issues.

- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Have a named senior manager (SAL) to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and DfE as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body.
- Ensure systems in place to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site, are implemented.
- Collate and analyse attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to develop solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Involve Education Welfare and develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

Department Heads/Pastoral Staff/Form Tutors will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents/carers.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve. A positive learning climate is essential for promoting good attendance.
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with the Education Welfare Officer and other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

Parents/Carers will:

- Talk to their son/daughter about school and their experiences whilst there. Take a positive interest in their son/daughter's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home.
- Encourage their son/daughter to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Contact the school if their son/daughter is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their son/daughter is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their son/daughter's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their son/daughter's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, going to bed at an appropriate time, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their son/daughter off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking their son/daughter on holiday during term-time.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. This responsibility is undertaken by Education Welfare.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, expect schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Categorising absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation and or evidence for the student's absence has been received.

Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness

In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carer informing the school that their son/daughter is ill will be acceptable. Where there are repeated absences due to reported illness parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. or in some cases a doctor's note.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

Excluded (No alternative provision made)

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's Learning & Guidance Co-ordinator/mentor will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Leave of Absence During Term Time

The guidance below reflects the changes to the Pupil Registration Regulations which came into force in September 2013.

All children of statutory school age who are registered at school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Any absence from school can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and have a detrimental effect on their future progress. This guidance is in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices which was reviewed and revised in September 2013.

Amendments to the 2006 pupil regulations remove references to family holiday, extended leave and the statutory threshold of ten school days. (Authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher)

The amendments make clear that:

'Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted'.

Leave of absence during term time is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not a parental right.

All decisions in relation to whether leave of absence is granted (authorised) or not (unauthorised) should be applied consistently and equitably.

Parents should follow the guidance in the 'Hexham Partnership of Schools' Policy for Leave of Absence during Term-Time' leaflet (a copy of this leaflet is available from the school office or can be viewed on our website – www.qehs.net) regarding any application for leave of absence. This leaflet also indicates the possible consequences of taking a child out of school without the headteacher's permission.

Application Process

QEHS will follow this process:

- A parent/carer requesting leave of absence during term time should make the application in writing at least two weeks in advance. (See Appendix 3)
- School will contact the parent/carer to discuss the reasons for the application and the impact the absence may have on the child's education.
- School will reply to all applications in writing stating their decision. (see Appendix 4)
- If leave is not granted, the reason for not authorising a request will be clearly stated, in addition to the possible consequences of disregarding the refusal to grant absence
- If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated including the date the child is expected to return to school including possible consequences if the child fails to return on that date.
- If a parent /carer remove their child from school without requesting leave of absence or without authorisation from the Headteacher, the parent will be informed in writing that a referral is being made to the Local Authority requesting a penalty notice is issued.

Religious Observance

QEHS acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent/carer to request their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's/carer's religious body.

Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their son/daughter to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Study Leave

School will offer in school study programmes/facilities for Year 11 students approaching GCSE examinations to reduce absence levels.

Traveller Absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents/carers from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their son/daughter accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When in or around Northumberland, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their son/daughter will attend full-time.

QEHS will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the student must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the student's school place at QEHS will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

QEHS can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents/carers must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

QEHS will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered students at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any student.

Late Arrival

Registration begins at 8.55am (during first lesson), students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 9.25am. Students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late after registration (U), this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the school pastoral office to sign in to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

Absence will only be **authorised** if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, evidence of attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

As a school, we are aware lateness can severely affect achievement. We monitor punctuality closely and have strategies in place to address lateness. We run late gate weeks twice half termly. Senior staff monitor the gates and immediate sanctions result if students are late which escalate if lateness becomes persistent. Awareness of the impact of lateness is raised with students, staff and parents regularly.

Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. It should be noted that the school is responsible for authorising absence not parents. If a student's absence falls to 85% this will be of great concern and the school will discuss the issue with the Educational Welfare Officer. School will not be able to authorise absence under this level. If the absence is due to an illness/medical issue then we will request you obtain a medical note from a GP/hospital.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms/shoes
- Having hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for teacher training (or other) purposes
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

Contact with Parents

QEHS runs a first day absence calling system if students are not in lessons by 9.30am. A text message will be sent to parents asking them to provide a reason for absence. Safeguarding of our students is of utmost importance to us.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfer between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority

QEHS will follow Northumberland County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown.

Using Attendance Data

An annual attendance Action Plan will be produced by the SAL – Diane Harris. Students' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

Indicators next to a student's name will show if their attendance has stayed the same, improved or deteriorated. This student level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (see KS3/4 Attendance Management Plan - Appendix 1).

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends at whole school and individual student levels. This will be used to inform whole school/partnership strategies to improve attendance and attainment and will include analysis of attendance of specific groups e.g. Girls/Boys; Special Educational Needs (SEN), Pupil Premium (Free School Meals Ever 6); Children Looked After (CLA).

QEHS will share attendance data with the DFE and the local authority as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Action plans based on the data analysis will be produced half termly. The focus will be whole school issues and specific actions with groups of students.

Support Systems

School recognise that poor attendance is often a sign that there are more serious issues going on in a child's life. This may be linked to problems at home and or in school. Parents/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

QEHS also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and looked after children. Data will also be analysed for specific groups of students.

The school will implement strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and students
- Attendance meetings with pastoral staff/School Attendance Contracts (see Appendix 2)
- Attendance reports
- Attendance group meetings
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors 1:1 meetings
- Student Voice Activities
- Working with friendship groups
- PSHE lessons
- Family learning/working with parents
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Alternative Provision
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Use of our inclusion facilities – The Base and Turning Point
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and students.

Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, QEHS will refer to Education Welfare and the use of legal sanctions will be considered.

Parenting Contracts (Used in conjunction with Fast Track to Attendance) (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003)

A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school, the parent/carer and the Local Authority (EWO). It can also be extended to include the child depending on age.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Northumberland County Council's Protocol.

Legal Sanctions

Prosecution

Where intervention by school and the Education Welfare Officer fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide Education Welfare/Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Penalty Notices

(Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered in accordance with Northumberland County Council's Protocols

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

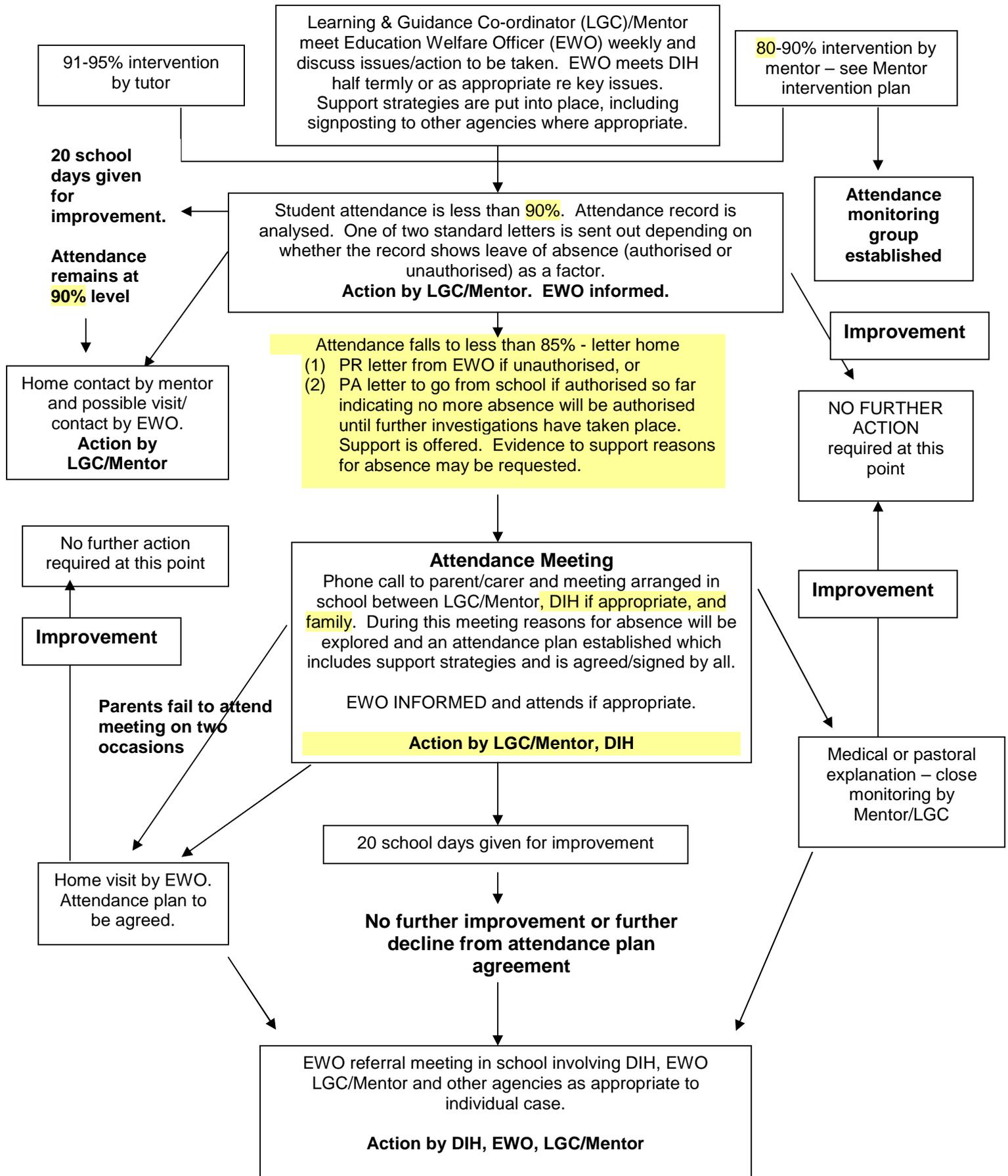
This policy was reviewed and agreed by the Education Committee at their meeting on Thursday 27 February 2014.

| Designation | Signature | Date |
|---|--------------|------|
| Chair of Education Committee: Linsley Charlton | | |
| Federation Headteacher, QEHS: Neil Morrison | | |
| Review Date | January 2015 | |

Appendix 1 Escalation of Attendance Interventions

KS3/4 Attendance Management Plan

% taken half termly from October half term



Appendix 2

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CONTRACT

Queen Elizabeth High School
Whetstone Bridge Road, Hexham NE46 3JB



| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--|
| Student's Name: | | Date of Birth: | |
| | | Age: | |
| | | Year Group: | |
| Student's Home Address: | | | |
| Parent/Carer (1) | Name: | | |
| | Telephone Number(s): | | |
| | Address if not student's home address: | | |
| Parent/Carer (2) | Name: | | |
| | Telephone Number(s): | | |
| | Address if not student's home address: | | |

CONTRACT

For your son/daughter to gain the greatest benefit from her education it is vital that he/she attends regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that **NAME** attends regularly.

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of your child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect her learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring NAME regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

UNDERSTANDING ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (**not by the parents**), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after registration has closed.
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If NAME is reluctant to attend, it is not acceptable to cover up his/her absence or to give in to pressure to excuse him/her from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. If NAME attendance at school is affected by persistent illness the school will not authorize the absence until they are satisfied the absence is valid.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEE (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year FOR WHATEVER REASON. Absence at this level damages your child's educational prospects and we need your full support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. If **NAME** is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark you will be informed of this immediately.

PROCEDURES

If your son/daughter is absent you must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in to school on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence and the dates of the absence – you should do this even if you have already telephoned.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your son/daughter's attendance deteriorates we will:

- Write to you.
- invite you in to school if absences persist to discuss the situation with the appropriate staff
- Refer you to the Education Welfare Service

CONTACT DETAILS

There are times when the school and Education Welfare Service need to contact you about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact details at all times. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed.

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the Education Welfare Service will become involved. The service will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve **NAME** attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, then sanctions such as Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court will be used. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Education Welfare Service/Local Authority.

LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If **NAME** misses the start of the day he/she can miss work and time with his/her class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

The school day starts at 8.55am and we expect **NAME** to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by twice a day and **NAME** will receive a late mark if he/she is not punctual.

In accordance with the Regulations, if **NAME** arrives after the close of registration she will receive a mark that shows her to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If your son/daughter has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with staff in school to resolve the problem, but you can approach staff at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

There is **NO** automatic entitlement in law to go on holiday/request leave of absence for any reason in school time. Leave of absence in term time will affect **NAME** schooling as much as any other absence and we advise you not to take your child out of school during term time.

Any applications for leave must be made in advance and agreement is at the discretion of the head teacher. In making a decision the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave or absence in term time. A leave of absence during term time leaflet is attached to the contract.

Full details of policy and procedures are available from the school.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice (see leaflet).

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the School Attendance Contract.

Parent/Carer – please print name and sign below:

Name (please print):

Signed:

Date:

On behalf of Queen Elizabeth High School

Name and Designation: (please print):

.....

Signature:

Date:

**QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL, HEXHAM
APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE OF CHILD FROM SCHOOL**

A parent/carer requesting leave of absence during term time should make the application in writing at least two weeks in advance. Please ensure all sections of the form are completed before returning it to Mr N Morrison, Federation Headteacher.

Forms can also be returned by email to bshevlin@qehs.net. The school will reply to all applications in writing stating the headteacher's decision.

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations explain clearly that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| Student's name: | | Date of birth: | |
| Tutor/Year group: | | Contact number(s): | |
| Student's home address: | | | |

I request permission for my child to be granted leave of absence from school between

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| First day of absence: | | Date of return to school: | | Total number of school days missed: | |
|------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|--|--|

| | | |
|---|---------------|--|
| If you are also submitting a request for absence for a child at another school in the Hexham Partnership of Schools please provide the name of the school(s), child(ren)'s name(s) and year group(s). <i>Please note you must complete a leave of absence request for each individual school and return it to them.</i> | School | Child(ren)'s Name & Year Group(s) |
| | | |
| | | |

Please fully explain the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the leave of absence you would like the Head Teacher to consider. (*Continue on a separate sheet if necessary*). Please refer to the Hexham Partnership of Schools' Policy for leave of absence during term time which is available on our website www.qehs.net or call 01434 610301 to request a copy; it is the decision of the headteacher as to what might constitute exceptional circumstances. Each request for any term-time leave will be considered on an individual basis. Examples of exceptional circumstance would be:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting.
- Evidence provided by an employer that states leave cannot be accommodated during school holidays without significant consequence.

Declaration

I have read and understood the information in the Hexham Partnership of Schools' Policy regarding leave of absence during term time, unauthorised absence, and Penalty Notices. I am aware of the possible consequences should I take my child on leave of absence without the prior authorisation of the headteacher.

Parent/Carer Name (please print):

Signature:..... Date:

REQUEST FOR STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

As I am sure you are aware, the government has high expectations for local authorities and schools to deliver quality education to the nation's children and it is therefore of the utmost importance that all children attend school regularly and punctually.

There will be occasions when a child has to miss school, for example, if she or he is unwell and parents/carers are expected to exercise their judgement on whether their child is fit to attend school if there are signs and symptoms of illness. Any other absences should be kept to an absolute minimum. In particular, parents/carers do not have the right to take their children out of school during term time in order to go on holiday.

Government regulations from September 2013 state that a headteacher 'may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances'. The Hexham Partnership of Schools discourage parents/carers from arranging any events during term time and will, as a rule, state that leave of absence will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances that might justify it.

In exceptional circumstances where leave of absence is granted, the student's attainment and ability to catch up on missed schooling will be the primary consideration. The secondary consideration will be the student's current attendance. The headteacher will examine the child's attendance record and should he or she have any concerns, for example should the child's average attendance be below 95%, it is highly unlikely that any authorised absence will be given. If your son/daughter's attendance falls below 85% it is of great concern to us and we have to discuss the issue with our Educational Welfare Officer. We will not be able to authorise absence under this level. If the absence is due to an illness/medical issue then we will request you obtain a medical note from a GP/hospital. We would remind parents/carers that in all cases where students cannot attend school it remains the responsibility of the school to authorise absence, not parents/carers.

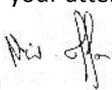
Important Information for Parents/Carers

- The Education Act (1996) requires parents/carers to ensure their child attends school regularly. There is no automatic right to take your child out of school during term time. The Law does however allow headteachers to consider individual requests to authorise a Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstance(s).
- The headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to justify an authorised absence. It is the parents/carers' responsibility when submitting the request to provide all the information and evidence to prove exceptional circumstances.
- The request for authorised Leave of Absence must be made at least two weeks in advance and the headteacher may invite the parent/carer(s) into school to discuss the request before a decision is made.
- If the headteacher authorises the Leave of Absence it is expected that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior to and after the date covered by the request.
- If the headteacher refuses Leave of Absence and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the headteacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.
- A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies.
- Where there is more than one child, each parent/carer may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.
- Research suggests that children who are absent from school may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results. When children are absent from school, they miss not only the teaching provided on the days when they are away, but are also less prepared for the lessons that follow which build on prior knowledge and teaching. As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

Please support your child in achieving and attaining at school by ensuring that his/her attendance is not affected by avoidable absence.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Neil Morrison


Federation Headteacher

APPENDIX 4 – standard letters used in reply to request for leave of absence

Authorised

Dear

Education Act 1996 – School Attendance

I note your request to take your child (insert name of child), (dob :.....) out of school during term time between the dates.....to

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless:

- An application has been made in advance to the headteacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with; and
- The proprietor (headteacher) or person authorised by the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to that application.

After carefully considering your application I have decided to **authorise** your request to your child (insert name of child), being taken out of school as I am satisfied that the exceptional circumstances criteria has been met.

The reason(s) for this is:

[Childs name] is expected to return to school on If [Child's name] fails to return on this date it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless medical evidence is provided to detail otherwise. I must warn you that failure to ensure your child's attendance is an offence under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996.

If the reasons given for your child's absence from school are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty up to **£120**, failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment**.

I ask that you work with the school to ensure that your child attends school every day.

Yours sincerely

Neil Morrison
Federation Headteacher

Unauthorised

Dear

Education Act 1996 – School Attendance

I note your request to take your child (insert name of child), (dob :.....) out of school during term time between the dates.....to

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless:

- An application has been made in advance to the headteacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with; and
- The proprietor (headteacher) or person authorised by the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to that application.

After carefully considering your application I have decided **not to authorise** your request for **holiday leave (or other reason)** as I am not satisfied that the exceptional circumstances criteria has been met.

The reason(s) for this is:

[Childs name] is expected in school during these dates and any absence will be considered unauthorised absence unless medical evidence is provided to detail otherwise.

I must warn you that failure to ensure your child's attendance is an offence under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996.

If the reasons given for your child's absence from school are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty up to **£120**, failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment**.

I ask that you work with the school to ensure that your child attends school every day.

Yours sincerely

Neil Morrison
Federation Headteacher