

Queensferry High School



Promoting Attendance and Managing Absence School Procedure

Purpose

This policy and associated procedures support and promote a positive ethos of inclusion – linked in our Inclusion Policy.

It provides a clear and consistent framework for people to promote attendance and manage absence in line with 'Getting it Right for every Child' and 'Included Engaged and Involved – part 1: a positive approach to the promotion and management of attendance in Scottish schools' (2019).

We recognise the strong link between school attendance and a positive and inclusive ethos where every child knows they belong. This procedure must be implemented within the context of a positive and supportive culture. We aim to ensure children attend school or another learning environment for the recommended 27.5 hours for secondary school.

Scope

This procedure sits within and is informed by the Communities and Families Included, Engaged and Involved in Edinburgh Policy. It is implemented within the context of our local approach to Getting it Right for Every Child and our recognition that strong partnership working with parents and children is crucial in achieving positive outcomes. The procedure applies to all Communities and Families Services staff, parents and pupils.

Procedures

It is the responsibility of staff to registering pupils in every lesson – period by period

➤ **Recording of period registration on SEEMiS**

Application > Attendance > Register by staff > select your own name and the correct period > click display register

Please note the following – you will potentially only be changing the following:

- Present to TBC
- TBC to present
- Late = late to class
- Once you have entered all the relevant information (codes) click "complete"
- IF THERE ARE NO ABSENCES IN YOUR CLASS PLEASE CLICK "COMPLETE"

- Do not change any codes that are already entered e.g. PER, SEL, OAT
- Do not do your register retrospectively. It must be completed in real time.
- If SEEMiS is down, please do a paper register and pass it down to the school office again in real time.

➤ **Completing a Cover Class register**

Application > Attendance > cover registration > select the teacher's name that you are covering for and the correct period > display register – then following instructions as above

➤ **Managing attendance and absences**

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer of a child of school age to make sure that their child attends the educational establishment. A pupil is considered absent if they fail to attend school for a period greater than half of the morning or afternoon session. This will affect their percentage attendance.

Absence from school is recorded as **Authorised**, that is approved by the Communities and Families department.

Or as, **Unauthorised**

It is our duty to track and know the whereabouts of all our pupils during the school day. As such if a child is unwell at home and is going to be absent, parent/carers should let us know as soon as possible by either phoning the School Office on 0131 319 3200, or by emailing the school at [Queensferry Community High School • <replace name="pagetitle"></replace> \(queensferryhigh.co.uk\)](mailto:queensferryhigh.co.uk)

. We would ask that you make contact with the school each day that your child is absent.

Where your child was expected to attend school and has not appeared in the morning and you have not informed us of any absence, you will be contacted by the school via text message as early as possible in the day to alert you to their absence. It is vital that we receive a response to this message immediately in order that we can update our records.

A second text message will be sent by school office after break. After this the school will attempt to make contact with the child's emergency contact to ascertain their wellbeing through the SSA or Pupil Support Leader. We

are obligated to continue trying to make contact until we receive a response.

If, after exhausting all the above, we still don't know the whereabouts of the child. Then we may contact the Police to report them as missing. This decision will be made by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and will be on an individual basis. However, all parents/carers should be aware that this may happen.

Lates

If a child is going to be late for whatever reason, it is important that parent/carers contact the School Office on 0131 319 3200, or by emailing the school [Queensferry Community High School • <replace name="pagetitle"></replace> \(queensferryhigh.co.uk\)](mailto:queensferryhigh.co.uk)

Planned Absence

Where possible medical appointments should be made out with school hours and the school made aware in advance. All pupils should sign out and back in at the School Office.

Please let the school know by letter if it is a planned absence (e.g. hospital appointment) or phone by no later than 0845hrs on the day of your child's unplanned absence (e.g. sickness bug). If there is no explanation from a child's parents/carers, the absence will be regarded as unauthorised.

There are a number of situations where a pupil will be credited with attendance but will not be in school. These situations should be recorded using the specific associated SEEMIS codes;

- An approved course of study at college or another school (OAT /O)
- Alternative timetable opportunities (OAT /O) schools should refer to Flexible and Alternative timetables procedure
- School camp / excursion (FLD)
- Work experience (WRK)
- Study leave (STY)

A pupil will not be credited with attendance when they are not in attendance and are:

- Excluded (EXL)
- On holiday with parents unauthorised (UPH)
- On holiday with parents authorised (PHL)

For eligible post 16 learners attendance must be accurately monitored to ensure proper entitlement to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). The EMA is a weekly payment, paid directly to children or young people who stay on at school, and is designed to help overcome financial barriers which otherwise may prevent them from staying on. 5

Education providers will be required to record attendance of EMA recipients on days when the place of learning is open to young people. Where the place of learning is closed on days when it would normally be open, for example due to public holidays, extreme bad weather, polling days, in-service days, young people should be treated as having attended for the purpose of the EMA. Similarly, any medical or dental appointments should be recorded for EMA purposes as authorised absence as long as an appointment card or note is provided.

Requests for Authorised Absences, including Holidays

Headteachers can approve absences of up to two school weeks (10 days) from school in certain situations. Any requests for extended absence over two school weeks (10 days) will be referred to the Senior Education Officer, who will decide whether the request can be authorised or not.

Please discuss any term time plans with your child's Headteacher before arranging. If permission is not granted, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence and can lead to further action on behalf of the City of Edinburgh.

Holidays - Please make every effort to avoid family holidays or events during term time as this will disrupt your child's education and reduces learning time. On rare occasions school may authorise a holiday if you can prove that work commitments make a family holiday impossible during school holiday times. Normally, your employer will need to provide evidence of your work commitments. Absence approved by the Headteacher on this basis is discretionary and regarded as authorised absence.

Other Authorised Absences

In some exceptional circumstances parents can request other authorised absences from

school. These include:

- Parental work placement abroad
- Cultural or heritage trip
- Return to country of origin eg. to care for relative, bereavement, family wedding
- Religious Observance

Please note, any requests for a pupil to be absent during term time, should be submitted to the Headteacher, in writing, at least two weeks in advance.

Referral to Educational Welfare Service

In situations where absence regularly below 85%, the school will automatically refer to the Educational Welfare Service for advice and a decision as to whether a referral to the Education Welfare officer is necessary.

A supportive approach is taken to unexplained absence. However, the Communities and Families department of the City of Edinburgh Council has legal powers to write to, interview or prosecute parent/carers, or refer pupils to the Reporter to the Children's Panel, if necessary.

Admission, Enrolment and Leavers

A register of admission and withdrawal must be kept for each school. Although SEEMIS holds all information required, an information sheet showing brief details of admission and withdrawals should be kept for back-up. **A pupil may only be entered on one school register at any one time. Every new pupil is provisionally enrolled until they have physically arrived in the school.**

➤ Register of Admission

To support this system, schools may find it helpful to update SEEMIS contact information for families more regularly than annually. 6 monthly is recommended.

If there are siblings in catchment schools, it can be helpful to contact them as they may have the correct contact information for the family.

P7-S1 transition can be key times to ensure handing over of accurate information.

In exceptional circumstance a school may be asked to enrol a child who may not actually attend the school. When a pupil has been admitted to the school, the register should be entered with the *Pupil Enrolment:*

Exceptional Circumstances: full name and date of birth of the pupil. Where a secondary pupil attends another school for certain classes, **they should appear only on the register of their base school.**

➤ Withdrawal and Removals (School Roll)

A pupil should be entered on the register as “withdrawn” from school when:

- a) It has been confirmed that they have been enrolled in another school (this includes independent special schools but does not include school provision within secure services). This confirmation should be sought from others, e.g. the enrolling school, as well as from the parents.
- b) Confirmation has been sent from Headquarters to the school that permission has been granted for the pupil to be educated at home.
- c) If they have been absent for a period of four consecutive weeks. This action should be taken **only on the advice of the Education Welfare Service.**

They have reached 16 years of age and have decided to leave school; Where a pupil has been withdrawn from the school, the register should be entered with The School to School Transfer System will facilitate the transfer of children’s data from school to school where the receiving school is known. However, there are a number of pupils for whom the destination is unknown. When a destination school is unknown the pupil should be recorded as Code A on SEEMIS until another school notifies S2S that they have enrolled the pupil. The pupil should be kept on the school register until they are found or the school is authorised by the department to remove them.

➤ **Children Missing from Education (CME)**

The Education Welfare Service should be informed of all absences that appear to be for no satisfactory reason. It is the duty of the Education Welfare Service to assist in tracing the pupil. It is helpful to notify the Education Welfare Service at the earliest opportunity in these circumstances.

In this situation consideration should be made as to whether the absence constitutes a wellbeing concern that should also be raised with social care direct. If the child is known to social work they should always be alerted to any unexplained absence.

The Education Welfare Service will support schools to investigate unexplained absences. This is likely to include;

- a) **making contact with those named in Emergency contact details held in the school**
- b) **enquiries with known friends or family**
- c) **enquiries with neighbours**
- d) **where appropriate enquiries with social work and housing**

Following initial enquiries consideration should be given to a possible referral to 'Children Missing from Education' (CME). In all instance if a pupil has been absent for four consecutive weeks and, despite vigorous checks by the school and the Education Welfare Service, it has not been possible to trace the family a referral should be made to Children Missing from Education (CME) in order to continue the search for the missing pupil on a national level.

Details of any child deemed as 'missing' from education should be passed to the relevant primary or secondary Senior Education Officers. A report should then be forwarded to the Head Teacher / EWS for completion. The report is then returned to the Local Authority Designated Officer for full referral to CME to be actioned.

Advice should be sought from the Senior Education Welfare Officer regarding removal from the school register.

Effective Practice in Attendance Monitoring

We know and understand the situation and circumstance behind the attendance figure and aim to use interventions to improve attendance. We must record and track attendance and the communication through SEEMiS and in school systems. (electronically – central location)

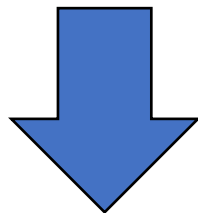
Targets:

- Increase 95%+ Attendance
- Early intervention screening for 85%-90%
- Reduce 85% below attendance

See Action Plan Flow Chart

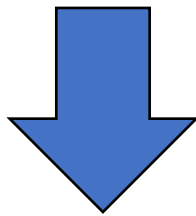
Universal Attendance Procedures:

- All staff have responsibility to complete SEEMiS period by period registration accurately within the first 15 mins of the lesson. If electronic registration is unavailable a paper copy should be sent to the office.
- Absence period 1 - office staff send an attendance check text home and update SEEMiS if responded to by end of period 1
- If no response – a second text message will be sent after break
- Following this if there is still no response then the SSA or Pupil Support Leader will try to contact home – if still no response after emergency contact then Police and/or SW will be contacted
- Attendance period by period registration from period 2– SSA (Mon,Wed,Thurs, Fri) checks period by period attendance for TBCs
- SSA investigates TBCs per periods by looking in school for pupil/ contacting teachers etc. if located SSA will update SEEMiS and support the pupil.
- SSA calls home regarding absence if not located in school and updates PSL if information is shared by parent/carer. If a pattern occurs or non-contact is established then SSA will contact PSLs initially and next steps actioned i.e emergency contact/ police or SW
- Lateness – office send text home – noted on class charts
- Parent/carer contact school re: absence through the following: absence form on the school website/ phone call no later than 09:00am and respond to any truancy communication throughout the day



Focused Attendance Procedures:

- Patterns 85%- 90% & TBCs - PSLs/ SSA will receive a weekly report from office
- Action: PSL will T&M and contact home where appropriate
- QA – period by period registration for all teaching staff will be spot checked (monthly) and monitored – incomplete registers will be sent to DHT Support/ Admin Officer to follow up and support staff to address this
- Accurate recording of Flexible and Alternative TT – Office/ SSA/ PSLs/ WBH Lead and ESB Lead



Targeted Attendance Procedures:

- 85% below Track and monitor monthly at House Team Meeting
- GIRFEC procedures – pathway 3 supports EWO/ Home Link or PEF PSO referrals/ Raised at PSG if required
- Identifying and removing barriers to attendance linked with school environment/ curriculum, health and wellbeing and social factors through appropriate policies; Inclusion, L&T, Relationship for Learning.
- Support will be identified for identified interest groups; CP/ LAC/ Care experienced/ PEF Identified/ Young Carers/ EAL/ GIRFEC Active Plans
- LAC/ Care Experienced attendance will be tracked and monitored at House Team Meetings weekly/ PSG Monthly and SEEMiS updated bi-annually (DEC/JUNE)

Summary:

- ✓ period by period attendance, including the attendance of pupils who are late
- ✓ There is a system to monitor attendance every period and absence “hotspots” effectively
- ✓ Information recorded is followed up immediately to ensure pupils are safe and well
- ✓ System in place to contact parents or carers as soon as an absence is noted at key points in the school day to help ensure that immediate action can be taken to find any pupils ‘missing’ from school. If attempts to contact the parent are unsuccessful then emergency contacts are used
- ✓ The SEEMIS system is effectively used to record absence
- ✓ Social Work are notified immediately by telephone of the absence of
- ✓ any child who is on the Council’s Child Protection Register. It will be for the Duty or case Social Worker to decide on the required subsequent course of action and to inform the school of that decision
- ✓ School are aware of early signs of concern which may lead to absenteeism and allow preventative support to be arranged
- ✓ GIRFEC child planning is effectively identify and address barriers to attendance
- ✓ School staff develop positive relationships with pupils and parents to ensure difficulties are discussed and resolved. There is a collaborative approach with families in line with local GIRFEC approaches.
- ✓ There is a whole school approach to positive relationships and the 4 R’s including approaches to promote equity and value diversity