Queen Elizabeth's School

Headteacher: Paula Smith

November 2026

Dear Families,

Every day counts: why we do not authorise leave of absence during term time

Being in school is important to the achievement, wellbeing, and development of all children. Evidence shows that students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results. Wherever possible, absence from school should be avoided as it can have a serious effect on your child's educational progress.

We are pleased to see that student attendance is improving at QE, and it is fantastic to witness the enthusiasm of our students who truly enjoy being in school, learning, and engaging with their peers. Thank you for your continued support in making attendance a priority.

The legal position

- Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure their child gets a full-time education. Usually, that means going into school from the age of 5 to 16.
- Schools are required to refuse requests for holiday absence in term time. This year there have been occasions when schools have been notified that the student is sick, but the school later discovers and reasonably believes that the reason given for the absence is not genuine, these absences will be unauthorised. Headteachers may grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
- Parents who take their children on an unauthorised holiday in term time could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. The amount of the fine is £80 if paid within 21 days and £160 if paid between 21 and 28 days.

What if my child needs to miss school?

Your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on a specific day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot go to school on a specific day because they are observing a religious event.
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it's not available or has not been provided yet.
- Your child does not have a permanent address and you are required to travel for work. This exception only applies if your child attends their usual school or another school where you are staying as often as possible. This must be 200 half days or more a year if they are aged 6 or older.

Exceptional circumstances will only be granted if requested in advance by a parent or carer, for example a hospital appointment or the funeral of a close relative. A holiday during term time is not an exceptional circumstance.

To support families, students will receive their Attendance Certificate Reports throughout the academic year, allowing parents to track their child's attendance progress.

Parents should ensure that any planned absence is authorised. An unauthorised absence may result in a penalty notice or court summons.

Our team are here to support families to have strong school attendance habits, if you would like to discuss attendance you can contact the following:

- **Your child's tutor**
- **Your child's Head of Year**
- **Email: attendance@qe.devon.sch.uk**

Thank you for helping us to achieve high attendance and support our aim of providing an excellent education for all our students.

Yours sincerely,

Paula Smith

Paula Smith
Headteacher

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