

8<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**The Parents and Carers  
of TQEA Students**



**The Queen Elizabeth  
Academy**

“We Can and We Will”

Dear Parent/Carer

**GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE: ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS FROM 8<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2021.**

The Department for Education has recently released to schools guidance for a full return from March.

From 8<sup>th</sup> March, we intend for our usual attendance rules to apply. We expect all students to attend full time unless in the case whereby a statutory reason applies, i.e. sickness, an exceptional circumstance etc. or where a student is complying with clinical and/or Public Health England advice.

The DfE have confirmed that the following responsibilities will resume:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence;
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

We recognise that some students will be anxious about returning to school. We will work with all students who require additional specific provision in order to facilitate a smooth return.

We will be working internally to construct a list of students who we feel would benefit from some extended support during their initial return. However, if you feel your child is anxious about returning to school, please email: [info@tqea.org.uk](mailto:info@tqea.org.uk)

**Students who have been shielding, or in a family home where shielding has taken place**

We also recognise that social contact during this time has been significantly reduced – especially amongst those shielding or in homes with a family member shielding.

If you believe your son/daughter is not able to return to school as they are complying with public health and/or clinical advice, we will work with you to complete a medical education continuity plan. You must speak to the attendance team at TQEA to check the guidance and the legal requirement.

We will contact all parents of students who we believe fit this category. However, if you feel your child will not be able to return to school following public health/clinical advice, you must speak to the attendance team at TQEA to check the guidance and the legal requirements as shielding letters only apply to the individual and therefore unless your child has been sent a letter personally they should be attending school. Please email [attendance@tqea.org.uk](mailto:attendance@tqea.org.uk) or call the school to speak to our attendance officer.

## What does good look like?

Government research shows a correlation between low attendance and low attainment. Students who attend regularly will typically achieve higher grades in examinations, have greater social skills and have the benefit of a full bodied education.

Our attendance target for the school is 96% and we expect all students to aim to reach 100% attendance throughout the year.

100% attendance	This is where all of our students aspire to be. 100% means no days off throughout the year.
96% attendance	This is around 6 days lost throughout the year. Your child's attendance is below 100% and they should try to attend every day moving forward.
Below 90% attendance	If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% (19 school days of absence), they will be classed as a persistent absentee.

## Frequently asked questions: what do we do?

### What if my child is sick?

We do understand that children become ill from time to time and, should your child be too ill to attend school, we ask that you contact the school by 9.00am. You must contact the school on each morning of absence. You may receive a call back from one of our attendance officers or a home visit, to check all is ok, if no contact is made from home.

### My child has a medical appointment. Can they be absent?

Medical appointments should not be taken during school time where possible. Where it is essential for an appointment to take place during the school day, we allow a two-hour window for a child's departure and return to minimise the disruption to learning. In these cases, please provide the school with sight of the child's appointment card.

### We want to go on a family holiday. Is this allowed?

The government is very firm in their guidance that schools are not allowed to authorise leave of absence during term time, including for family holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any period of unauthorised absence may result in you, as a parent, receiving a fixed penalty notice fine. Our school office can provide you with a form if you wish to request leave under exceptional circumstances.

We recognise that the vast major of parents elect not to take their child out of school due to the detrimental impact it can have on their child's studies.

### What time is late? What happens if my child is late?

All students are expected to arrive at school and be in their allocated area for 8.45am.

All children receive a dedicated registration session in the morning with their form tutor. During this time, key messages are shared and students will be taught work in line with our PSHE/SMSC programme of learning.

Any student who arrives after 8.45am should report to reception. Staff will be present to conduct a late gate and students will be ushered to lessons promptly and may receive a sanction for their lateness. Three lates in a single week result in an after school detention.

### **What happens if the school has concerns about my child's attendance?**

The school monitors pupils' absence on a daily, weekly and termly basis.

If your child's absence causes concern, we will contact you to discuss this. Our attendance escalation process will always start with a phone call for us to discuss any barriers to learning.

If your child's attendance doesn't improve, you may be called in for a parenting contract meeting or Early Help Assessment. Both of these meetings are to be seen as a supportive measure to ensure that your child attends regularly and on time to prevent escalated action being taken by the local authority.

### **What action can the local authority take if my child misses school?**

#### ***Warwickshire County Council - Leave of Absence***

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council's Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

#### **Who can I contact to discuss attendance at school?**

Please contact [attendance@tgea.org.uk](mailto:attendance@tgea.org.uk) if you have any questions regarding school attendance.

Thank you for your continued support in helping your child to fulfil their academic ability at TQEA. We look forward to welcoming them back.

Yours sincerely



Mrs B Gibson  
Assistant Principal  
The Queen Elizabeth Academy