

Queen's Qatar Attendance Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the attendance policy is to:

1. Ensure a positive and productive learning environment at Queen's Qatar, by promoting regular attendance among students that contributes to their achievements;
2. Foster a sense of responsibility, punctuality, and accountability in our community;
3. Allow the school to plan and deliver its programmes with consistency;
4. Provide guidelines for attendance procedures.

Policy statement

Consistent attendance is vital to student progress and engagement. Students who miss school quickly develop gaps in learning and achievement.

This policy enables Queen's Qatar to accurately track attendance records, identify patterns, and provide necessary support to students and staff when needed.

A strong partnership between the school and families is vital in promoting regular attendance. We encourage open communication, collaboration, and active involvement by families to address attendance concerns and to provide the necessary support to our students.

It is important to follow any national legal requirements for school attendance and to adhere to relevant procedures.

Legal Requirements

Where required, the school will follow local guidelines and report attendance and absence to the relevant government agency, such as the Ministry of Education.

Attendance Expectations

Student expectations:

- Students are required to attend every scheduled school day during the school year;
- Students should attend all lessons and be punctual and committed to fulfilling all their academic duties;
- Queen's Qatar stipulates 180 days of instruction as the academic year, which students are expected to attend if they are enrolled with the school from the beginning of the academic year;
- We recognise that some students enrol with the school after the start of the academic year;

- Students are expected to follow the school day's timings and stay on for after-class activities;
- Students will also be expected to attend school celebration events such as graduation ceremonies (if applicable to their age group), school fairs and inter-school competitions if required.

Parents/guardian responsibilities:

- To ensure that their children are punctual and attend school;
- To follow the procedure to communicate and give reasons for all absences;
- To ensure children do not miss school to go on holiday during term time.

Procedures for recording attendance

Student attendance is recorded on the school's Management Information System (MIS), e.g. iSAMS. Attendance information may be collected via:

- Students registering electronically on arrival and exit from the school premises via their ID credentials;
- Attendance is taken by a tutor/class teacher or subject teacher at the start of the school day and submitted to the MIS. This may be repeated at other designated times during the school day;
- Late attendance for students arriving after normal entry time is recorded electronically or via the school office;
- For Secondary school students, attendance is taken at the start of each lesson.

Daily attendance is stored on the school management system.

Notification and communication of absences

If a student is absent this must be communicated to the school via email or telephone. All absences must be communicated to the school by 7.30 am on the first day and any subsequent days of absence. Should absence be long term this will be entered into the MIS system on receipt of medical authorisation and the need to inform the school daily will be removed.

Authorised Absences

Authorised absence can be approved on request by the school and is considered on an individual basis. Authorised absence usually constitutes an illness, family emergency, family event involving immediate family e.g. wedding or funeral, religious observance or representing the country in an arts or sporting event. Authorised absence will usually have a specific time limit of no more than a few days. In the event of an authorised absence, teachers will provide an overview of work covered and access to class learning materials. Students with authorised absence will not be able to join their classes online.

Absence during a section of the school day

Sometimes medical appointments, examinations, and other events take place during the school day and students will need to leave before the end of the school day. Absence can be authorised by the school on a case-by-case basis. Parents/carers must provide information on the reason for the absence request accompanied by official documentation, e.g. appointment slip, letter of invitation, etc. If authorised, the student will be required to sign out/swipe out and must be met by a parent if in the Primary section of the school.

Unauthorised absences

It is important for child safeguarding and protection that all absences are reported by parents and/or carers. The school will follow up with the parents/carers of any student who has an unauthorised absence. Follow up will begin after the start of the school day.

All absences are considered unexcused if the school is not updated within 24 hours. Vacation does not constitute authorised absence. In the event of unauthorised absence, teachers are not expected to provide an overview of work covered or access to class learning materials.

If unauthorised absences continue the school will arrange a meeting to discuss and support the family in meeting the basic attendance expectations, this may take the form of a support plan. A student is classed as having chronic absenteeism once they reach the country-specific limit of unauthorised 18 absences or 90% attendance.

Consequences of absence

It is important to note that absence from school, either authorised or not, can lead to academic consequences for students. These include, but are not limited to:

- Missing assignments: Students are responsible for completing all assignments missed during absences (authorised or otherwise);
- Missing assessments: If a student misses an external test or examination due to an absence, credit may not be awarded for the missed test or examination, and this may impact the final outcome accordingly*;
- If a student accumulates multiple unauthorised absences during one school year, a recommendation may be made that the student be retained in the same year/grade the following year. Relevant national regulations may mean the student's place could also be deemed to be at risk*;
- If a student is older than 16 and has already been retained, they may not be registered for the following academic year, and recommendations may be made for alternative schooling¹.

Truancy

¹ Exam board/national education ministry regulations may determine the outcome of these cases.

Truancy refers to the intentional absence from a class or school without a valid reason. Truancy can occur for several reasons, including disengagement with school, academic challenges, bullying or personal safety concerns, personal or family issues, peer influence, mental health concerns, or a lack of consequences. It is essential to identify and address the underlying reasons for truancy to develop effective strategies for prevention or intervention. We will work with students, parents, and available community partners to ensure that students who are truanting are supported and able to re-establish regular school attendance, this may take the form of a support plan.

School refusal/school avoidance/school phobia

A small number of students can experience persistent and excessive fear or anxiety about attending school. They can experience anxiety and physical symptoms when faced with the prospect of attending school, which can lead to complete avoidance. There can be varied reasons for school avoidance including separation anxiety, social anxiety, bullying or peer conflict, academic pressure and mental health challenges. A support plan will be created to aid student reintegration and progression.

Supporting regular school attendance

- **Monitoring attendance** - Attendance data and medical centre attendance data will be reviewed on a weekly basis and monitored for patterns of absence, school refusal, lateness, truancy or absence from lessons;
- **Collaboration with parents and carers** - Communication between the class teacher and or tutor is established and promoted;
- **Fostering a positive school environment** – Queen’s Qatar will foster a positive and inclusive school environment that promotes a sense of safety, belonging and support. Personal, social, leadership and health development programmes will provide the opportunity for students to learn about and understand the best ways to manage the challenges of life;
- **Student advocacy** - The school will provide students with authentic and impactful communication routes to share their commitment and connection to the school. These will provide genuine opportunities for students to identify areas for development in the school which will lead to improving attendance.

Instructions for reporting absence are available on the parent portal and/or website.

Where attendance challenges are evident:

- **Support plans** – We will discuss and develop an individual support plan that addresses the individual needs of the student. This may involve gradual reintroduction to school, alternative learning pathways, emotional and academic support;
- **Mental Health support** - The school will either employ or provide access to the services of a school counsellor or other mental health professionals to help students develop coping strategies, manage anxiety, and address mental health concerns.

Attendance Flowchart:

