

QMX ACADEMY

# Attendance Policy

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## Contents Page

1. Policy Statement
2. Objectives
3. Attendance Expectations
4. Recording Attendance
5. Managing Absence
6. Supporting Regular Attendance
7. Procedures for Absconding ( Leaving Site Without Permission )
8. Monitoring and Escalation
9. Roles and Responsibilities
10. Policy Review

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## 1. Policy Statement

At QMX Academy, we believe consistent attendance is essential to learner progress, safety, and wellbeing. As an alternative provision, we are committed to removing barriers to engagement and working closely with families and external professionals to support regular attendance.

This policy outlines our approach to recording, monitoring, and promoting attendance, as well as procedures for managing absences, persistent non-attendance, and incidents where a learner leaves site without permission (absconds).

## 2. Objectives

- Ensure accurate, consistent attendance recording
- Promote high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Identify and respond to attendance concerns early
- Keep children safe and accounted for during the Academy day
- Meet statutory requirements under the Education Act 1996 and DfE guidance

## 3. Attendance Expectations

- Learners are expected to attend all scheduled sessions.
- Parents/carers must notify the Academy of any absence by scheduled start time
- A minimum of 85% attendance is required unless exceptional circumstances apply. If this threshold is not met the following will apply:
  - **Initial Support and Monitoring:** The student's attendance will be closely monitored. If patterns of absence emerge, the designated staff member (such as the Attendance Lead or DSL) will initiate a supportive conversation with the learner and their parent/carer.
  - **Tailored Intervention Plan:** An individual support plan or attendance action plan may be drawn up, identifying targets, support actions, and review dates.
  - **Communication with Commissioners:** If the student is placed by a commissioning school or local authority, their designated contact will be informed of persistent absence and updated regularly on efforts made to support the learner. This communication will take place as soon as concerns arise and continue throughout any intervention period.
  - **Escalation:**  
If attendance does not improve despite interventions, the provision may review the suitability of the placement and explore alternative arrangements in discussion with commissioners and parents/carers.

## 4. Recording Attendance

- Registers are taken **twice daily** (AM and PM sessions) by the class tutor or key worker
- Attendance data will be shared with commissioners twice a day providing a summary of both morning and afternoon registers. In the case of safeguarding concerns, unexplained absence, or when a student is considered high-risk, commissioners will be informed upon completing the registers. Frequency and format of attendance updates can be tailored based on the individual needs of the learner and as outlined in the Service Level Agreement (SLA) or placement referral documentation.
- All codes follow DfE guidance for school attendance.
- Attendance is logged in our management information system and reviewed weekly.

## 5. Managing Absence

- **Persistent Absence (PA):** Learners with attendance below 90% will be monitored through a support plan and, where needed, external referrals (e.g. Early Help).
  - **Role of Commissioners and Families in Managing Persistent Absence:**
    - **Commissioners:**
      - Are notified when attendance drops or concerns emerge.
      - Decide whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.
      - Are involved in attendance review meetings and help agree on actions to be taken.
      - Support in reviewing or adjusting the learner's provision or placement if needed.
      - Can make or support referrals to external agencies such as Early Help, CAMHS, or social care.
      - May escalate attendance concerns to formal processes such as Attendance Panels or legal intervention, where appropriate.
    - **Families/Carers:**
      - Are expected to maintain regular communication with QMX Academy regarding their child's attendance.
      - Participate in support plan meetings to explore barriers to attendance and agree on strategies.

- Work in partnership with QMX staff and commissioners to ensure agreed actions are followed through.
- Are responsible for promoting the importance of attendance at home and supporting the learner to attend regularly.

## 6. Supporting Regular Attendance

We support attendance by:

- Offering flexible, tailored timetables where appropriate
- Providing wellbeing and mental health support
- Building positive, trusting relationships with learners
- Working closely with parents/carers and external agencies

## 7. Procedures for Absconding (Leaving Site Without Permission)

### **Definition:**

Absconding refers to when a learner deliberately leaves QMX Academy premises during the day without permission or supervision.

### **Response Protocol:**

#### **1. Immediate Action**

- Staff report the incident to the DSL or senior leader immediately.
- A dynamic risk assessment is completed to evaluate urgency and vulnerability.
- Designated staff attempt to make contact with the learner via phone/text (if appropriate and safe to do so).

#### **2. Parent/Carer Notification**

- Parents/carers and commissioners are contacted without delay to inform them the learner has left the premises.

#### **3. Police Involvement**

- If the learner is under 16 or considered vulnerable, and cannot be located within 10–15 minutes, the police will be informed via 101 or 999 (if at immediate risk).

#### 4. Record-Keeping

- All incidents are logged with time of departure, actions taken, contacts made, and return time (if applicable).
- Safeguarding records will be updated and reviewed by the DSL.

#### 5. Debrief and Follow-Up

- On return, the learner will be supported through a calm, non-punitive reintegration process.
- A debrief will be held to explore reasons for leaving and identify any safeguarding or support needs.
- Parents/carers **and the commissioner** will be involved in the follow-up process to ensure a collaborative approach to ongoing support.
- A Behaviour Support or Safety Plan may be updated or initiated.

## 8. Monitoring and Escalation

- Weekly reviews are conducted to identify trends and persistent absence.
- Where concerns persist, QMX Academy will:
  - Arrange meetings with parents/carers
  - Put support/intervention plans in place
  - Share concerns and data with the commissioner, who holds responsibility for referring to the Local Authority (e.g. Educational Welfare Officer) where appropriate

## 9. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Staff:** Take registers, log absence, support reintegration, raise concerns
- **Parents/Carers:** Report absence daily, attend meetings when requested
- **Designated Attendance Lead:** Monitor patterns, oversee interventions, liaise with agencies
- **DSL:** Ensure safeguarding responses are in place where relevant

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## 10. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually or following any significant attendance incidents or DfE updates.