



**Appendix (1) Attendance Policy
Haileybury Turnford Practice and Guide
For Home Visits**

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Responsible Committee:	Education Committee

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to define the agreed processes and minimum safeguarding requirements to see students who are on roll, but absent from school. The process relates to students who have not been seen or contact made in school for 3 or more continuous days and to those whose absence is an immediate cause for concern. It is intended for use in conjunction with the risk assessment in Annex A.

This document is not relevant where the Police and/or social care are already involved. A completed risk assessment is required prior to requesting a police welfare check. The information will need to be available to share with the Police on request.

These procedures do not, in any way, replace the actions a school routinely takes in the case of any student who is absent from school from the first day of absence where this is without notice from the parents, is totally out of character and the circumstances cause serious concern.

A. Sources of information of student safety

Professionals who may see a student out of school:

- Member of school staff
- Attendance Officer
- Family Support Staff
- Health Visitor / School Nurse
- Connexions PA / YOT Officer / Youth Worker / St Giles Trust
- Social Worker or other Social Care staff
- Police Officer
- Others who may see a student out of school including staff from private, voluntary or independent sector.

In addition to the above, information about a student who has not attended school regularly may also come from emergency contacts, other children and young people, in particular, friends of the student and other parents/carers who know the family. (A judgement will need to be made about the reliability of the data.)

In all cases of continuing absence from school where the school has established that the student has not been seen by a reliable person, the school should undertake a risk assessment in order to decide about whether a Home Visit and welfare check is necessary. The following guidance is provided in order to help undertake the risk assessment.

B. Situations which do not require a Home Visit and welfare check.

1. **Medical absence:** where absence is authorised with the parent having supplied sufficient information to the school about the absence and where case is deemed to be low risk. (NB If absence is related to a medical condition, it may be necessary to refer to HCC Attendance Team if student is likely to be off school for 15 days or more due to the condition.
2. **Plan in place to meet and resolve cause of absence:** where reason for absence is known and plans are in place to meet with the student and/or parent to resolve the situation to facilitate a return to school.
3. **Continuing unauthorised absence and no reason to believe student is at any particular risk:** where reasons for refusal to attend have been established and attempts made to date to re-engage the student have failed, where no information has come to light to cause any concern beyond the concern caused by the absence. Relevant services listed above should be informed of the student's absence to facilitate the sharing of key information with the school. Where appropriate and agreed by the parent or young person, the Early Help Assessment (EHA) process should be used to coordinate services to support the young person and to continue to try to resolve the situation leading to a return to school.

C. Situations which do warrant a Home Visit and welfare check. (Details to be added to CPOMS following a Home Visit).

1. **Child thought to be at risk of significant harm (no current Social Care involvement):** such concerns warrant referral to Hertfordshire Children's Safeguarding Services.
2. **Child thought to be at risk of significant harm (current Social Care involvement):** refer to allocated Social Worker.
3. **First period of 10 days of continuous unauthorised absence:** refer to Hertfordshire Attendance Team in line with the LA Policy & Practice Guide – The Attendance Improvement Officer will normally call School Attendance Panel Meeting at the school to which parent(s)/carer(s) and child will be invited to attend. In the case where the parent does not attend the Panel Meeting or where they fail to bring the student with them AND that child is still not being seen in school, then the Attendance Improvement Officer will undertake a home visit unless another professional has seen the child and knows them to be safe. There may be occasions where another professional in the locality is better placed to seek to see the young person.

It should be noted that it is in order for a school to refer to the Attendance Team before 10 days of continuous absence where that is felt appropriate.

4. **Continuing unauthorised absence after Attendance Team, other professional or reliable person has seen the student:** a risk assessment should be carried out to decide about whether a Police welfare check should be requested. This decision would rest on any new information that has come to light leading to concern.

D. HOME VISITS BY PROFESSIONALS WHERE STUDENT IS NOT SEEN

Where a home visit is undertaken by a member of school staff, an AIO or other professional and this does not lead to the student being seen, or where there is no answer at the address and neighbours are not able to confirm a recent sighting of the child, and there are concerns about the student's wellbeing, a card/letter should be left stating that if no contact is received by the school (or the person visiting) from the home within 24 hours that provides a satisfactory explanation about the student confirming their safety, that they will be referred to the Police and/or Social Care.

N.B. a card should not be left if in the professional's view, if this could place the child at risk.

E. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What should a school do where there is a new situation arising where a student has continuous absence exceeding 3 days?**

When there has been no contact from the parent and there is no response to a text or phone call from the school by the end of day 3 of absence and where there is no information from other students/parents suggesting that the family is on holiday and this is out of character. A no-contact letter is sent by email and First-Class Post giving the parent/carer 24 hours' notice, if after this time period, the school have not received any contact from the parent or carer, then a request should be made to a member of school staff with **responsibility for home visiting to carry out a home visit**. Ideally, the visit should be undertaken by two members of staff; the Attendance Officer and a member of the pastoral team such as the Assistant Year Achievement Coordinator or alternatively a member of administration staff. Cover arrangements should be made to ensure two members of staff are available to make the visit, if this is required. If the visit takes place but results in the child not being seen, a referral should be made to the Attendance Team prior to the established limit of 10 days of unauthorised absence using the unexplained absence form (Annex C). In addition, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed.

2. Where child has sporadic absences which continuously recur? There is an allocated Social Worker but child is not subject to a Child Protection Plan?

Social Worker/school rep and Attendance Improvement Officer should all liaise. Additional home visits and welfare checks should not routinely be necessary in addition to the Social Worker's involvement unless explicitly agreed between Social Worker and the Attendance Improvement Officer.

3. If a home visit has not resulted in a student being seen, what happens next?

If it has been deemed necessary for a home visit to be undertaken by a professional (e.g. member of school staff, other professional) but it has not been possible to establish the student's safety, despite the fact that a card/letter has been left requesting contact **and there has been no response**, then a request should be made to the Police and/or Children's Services. However, a referral to the Police and/or Social Care should follow as a result of an honestly held belief that the child may be at risk and on completion of the risk assessment determining the child to be at risk.

4. What should happen where a parent/carer states they do not know where their child is?

If the parent/carer doesn't know where the child is, if they left for school and didn't arrive, the parent and school report the child as missing to the Police unless the child has recent history of truancing and parent reports that they know where the child is likely to be and locates them. If the parent reports child to be missing from home beyond that school session or day, the parent should be informed that they must report the child missing to the Police. School (or other professional who has ascertained from the parent that the child is missing) must know that the police are aware of the child being missing by contacting the Police themselves on the same day and immediately following the contact with the parent.

5. Who in Education is responsible for the student when they are not attending school?

Lead responsibility remains with the school. Other services who have received and accepted a request for support are also responsible.

6. What are the cross service responsibilities regarding student safety updates?

- If an EHA is ongoing, TAF and Lead Professional with school.

- If child has an allocated Social Worker CIN/child protection procedure should be followed.
- If neither of the above apply, unless there is specific urgent information to share, sharing should be via normal information sharing mechanisms in place between school staff and support services.

7. What should happen if a student is reported by friends/other adults to be living at places other than their usual home address?

- If student is not attending school, this should be seen as being of concern and the school should discuss the situation with the parent and normal child protection processes should be followed (i.e. if this is a possible private foster care arrangement, it must be referred to and assessed by Social Care).
- In terms of non-attendance, another adult who regularly has a student staying with them would become responsible for their non-attendance and normal Attendance Improvement attendance processes would need to be followed in respect of that adult, in addition to the mother and/or father, carer.

8. What should happen where a student is not attending long term alternative work placement or provision or is dual registered/a guest student on another school roll?

- The school should follow the same procedures and ascertain additional information from the alternative education provider if available as part of the risk assessment.

9. Are there different expectations where student turns 16?

- Schools and support services are required to continue with efforts to bring about regular attendance to the end of year 11 irrespective of age (i.e. to the last Friday in June of the academic year).
- The same general principles apply as for under 16s.

10. What should happen where there is very poor attendance and a referral to Social Care results in advice to the school to start an EHA (Early Help Assessment)?

- The case will have been assessed by Children's Services and it will not have met relevant thresholds. The most appropriate professional should work towards engaging the parent/student in the EHA process. If concerns persist (even after the EHA process has been followed or, following parent's and/or young person's refusal to engage), escalate the case back to Families First either through a Multi-Agency Support Hub (MASH) or direct to Children's

Services if the student continues to be deemed to be at risk of significant harm.

11. Referral to Social Care – should this always be by the school?

If information comes to attention of school staff first, then yes. If another service, if they are in school they should report to school designated senior lead (DSL) or appointed deputy. If out of school, agency/service should follow their own agency's procedures and report through correct structure (as per existing child protection procedures) – also, advise school staff of the matter.

12. What should a school do when a child fails to return when expected following a holiday or trip abroad?

If students are absent for 2 days following a holiday or trip abroad and did not return to school as expected, the following process should take place. The Attendance Officer should attempt to contact the parents/carers and other listed adults such as emergency contacts to establish that the student is safe. If no information is obtained that enables the school to establish that the student is safe and well, a referral should be made to the Attendance Team within 5 school days of the expected return date. Section 12(2b) Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 states that schools must refer children to the LA where they have been continuously absent without authorisation for a period of 'not less than 10 school days. In the case of failure to return from authorised leave, 5 days should be the limit applied. N.B. The risk assessment must take into consideration and also forced marriage and female genital mutilation guidance.

13. What should a school do when there is information which leads staff to believe that a student may be leaving for a limited period or permanently where concern exists about the child's safety e.g. forced marriage, female genital mutilation etc.?

Follow child protection procedures, by referring to the Police.

NB IF A SITUATION LEADS TO CONCERNS OF A CHILD PROTECTION NATURE, ALWAYS FOLLOW CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES AND REFER TO THE POLICE AND/OR SOCIAL CARE & SAFEGUARDING IN LINE WITH THESE PROCEDURES.

ANNEX A ABSENT STUDENTS RISK ASSESSMENT
(Required prior to requesting a police welfare check)

When was the student last seen in school?

1.) If less than 5 days, school assessment of level of risk -

Description of actions already taken by school:

Description of any known facts inc. information from staff/students/others:

Assess Risk: low / medium / high

If **low risk**, no further action but consider referral to EWO if not already involved.

If **high risk**, follow CP procedures/refer to Social Care and or Police.

If **medium risk**, are there any other professionals involved with the child? If yes, give details and advise them of student's absence – that professional to act in accordance with their service/agency's procedures. Ascertain if they have seen the child or if they have any safeguarding concerns. If no, refer to EWO - complete usual EWS referral form – that EWO to act in accordance with EWS procedures

2.) If more than 5 days, school assessment of level of risk –

Description of actions already taken by school:

Description of any known facts inc info from staff/students/others:

Assess Risk: low / medium / high

If **low risk and between 5 - 10 days of absence**, consider referral to AIO if not already involved. If **high risk**, follow CP procedures/refer to Social Care and or Police. If **medium risk**, are there any other professionals involved with the child? **If so, advise them of absence as part of normal liaison process.**

At the point of 10 days of unauthorised absence, school must refer to AIO. From this point onwards, liaise with involved professionals as part of normal procedures.

LOW RISK:

- School has information from the parent/carer/other that leads them to believe that student is safe, or
- School has information from other students/parents that leads them to believe that student is safe, or
- School has no information despite attempts to contact family/emergency contact/s, this is a regular pattern for the student and there have previously been no safeguarding concerns about the student

MEDIUM RISK:

- School has information from the parent/carer/other that leads them to have some concerns about the student, or
- School has information from other students/parents that leads them to have some concerns about the student, or
- School has no information despite attempts to contact family/emergency contact/s, this is out of character for the student and the parent/carer □ The known concerns do not constitute a child protection referral

HIGH RISK:

- School assessment is that child is at risk of significant harm (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect) as defined by Children Act 1989, S47.

THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS:

As part of the decision-making process as to whether a case is low, medium or high risk, schools should refer to the guidance and procedures via the links in section F of the main document. Schools will be aware that the 3 recurring key indicators of serious case reviews are: parental substance abuse (drugs and alcohol), domestic violence and parental/carer mental illness.

ANNEX B

HOME VISIT 'URGENT' LETTER

Date

NAME

ADDRESS

Dear NAME

SCHOOL ABSENCE – NO CONTACT RECEIVED

(Please be aware you have 24 hours to respond to this letter).

Name of child has been absent from school since DATE and we have not received a reason for NAME OF CHILD absence/s.

The school has a duty of care for students who are on roll at the school. Unless your child is too ill to attend school or you have advance permission from the school for your child to be absent your child should be attending school. If your child has a medical condition that we are unaware of, you should inform the school to ensure we can support your child's education.

If, after receiving this letter, we do not receive a response within 24 hours, informing the school about your child's absence our policy states that we are required to conduct a Home Visit. If there is no answer when we make a Home Visit we will leave a calling card at the parent/carer address and if necessary take next steps including informing relevant external agencies and the Education welfare Officer.

An unauthorised absence is classed as truancy by the Local Education Authority and Department for Education. If a student is persistently absent you will be at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice and fine. We aim for every student to attend school for at least 96% of the time.

For further information regarding our Attendance Policy please see the provided link:

Please email **attendance@haileyburyturnford.com** / telephone 01992 308333 stating clearly the following:

Your Child's Name and Year Group:

Date of Absence:

Reason for Absence:

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

Mrs G Hayward

Annex C

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE FORM

Notification of Student Absence: 10 consecutive days unexplained absence or irregular attendance.

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Section 12 of requires schools to inform the local authority of any students who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance, or have 10 or more consecutive school days absence without the school's permission. Schools are also under a safeguarding duty, under **section 175 of the Education Act 2002** to investigate any unexplained absences. This form is designed to assist schools comply with their responsibilities. You may receive a follow up call from the Local Authority Attendance Officer if further action is required.

Academy/School:	LA number:
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Student Name:	UPN:
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Date of Birth:	Year Group:	Ethnicity:
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Home Address

Parent names and contact details

Details of absence: <u>Please attach print out of student's Attendance Register</u> <u>Please state what action school are taking to address attendance concern:</u>	
Actions Taken:	Date and Outcome:
Written to parent/s highlighting concerns regarding attendance. Please confirm dates of letters.	
Invited parent/s to attend a meeting to discuss student absence. Please confirm dates and outcomes	
Phone calls/text/email. Please confirm dates and outcomes	
Phoned other family contacts – please confirm dates and outcomes	
Where siblings attend other schools, contact other school for information on the family – please confirm dates and outcomes	

If other professionals involved with the family contacted them for information – please confirm dates and outcomes	
Considered the use of the Penalty Notice process to address attendance concerns. If not why?	
When the student has not been seen for a period exceeding 3 days (and/or school have not been able to make contact with parent(s) after one day) schools must ensure they comply with their safeguarding responsibilities i.e. undertake a welfare visit.	

SAFEGUARDING – PLEASE NOTIFY THE MULT-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB (MASH) IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS FOR THIS CHILD

Any Other Actions taken by the school to address absence, i.e. discussion with MASH?

School contact:..... Tel/email address:

Date Local Authority informed:

Please return to the Area Attendance Duty Team using secure email system i.e.

Schools or Herts FX to:

AttendanceDutyEast@hertfordshire.gov.uk

AttendanceDutyWest@hertfordshire.gov.uk

East Area: North Herts, Stevenage, East Herts, Broxbourne and Welwyn Hatfield

West Area: Watford, Three

Annex D: Home Visit Risk Assessment

Date: Property visiting:

	Yes	No	Unknown
Is this the first time of visiting this property?			
Is this visit unannounced?			
Is the information being provided during the visit likely to be met with an emotional reaction?			
Is the property known for having harmful/illegal substances present?			
Are there any animals known to be at the property which would be considered dangerous?			
Are there any known previous or current violent/difficult relationships within the property?			
Is the property in an area which is known for criminal activity?			
Are there any restrictions on being able to access the property easily?			
Is there likely to be any unknown adults present during the visit to the property?			
Has there been any police involvement at the property?			
Score: 3 marks per 'Yes' response 2 marks per 'Unknown' response 1 mark per 'No' response			
Total:			

Total marks:

10 or less: Proceed with usual caution
 11-20: Take steps to reduce the risk; proceed only with maximum caution
 21+: Consider hosting the meeting at an alternative venue, such as a local school or other meeting place

Other comments or reasoning for different measures being taken:

(Addendum)

Annex E: COVID -19 Risk Assessment when making a home visit

	Yes	No	Comments
Will you need to travel by car to carry out the home visit?			If two people are carrying out a home visit ensure you travel in separate vehicles.
Does any member of the family or household have COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19?			If Yes consider alternative arrangements to make contact safely with the student and parent.
Will you have to enter a communal building to gain entry to the property e.g. is the property a block of flats?			Follow Health and Safety guidance i.e. hand sanitise, social distancing and wear a mask or face covering when entering and leaving the property.

Date: Property visiting:

DO

- ✓ try to stay at least 2 metres (3 steps) away from anyone you do not live with (or anyone not in your support bubble)
- ✓ wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- ✓ use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- ✓ wash your hands as soon as you get home
- ✓ cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- ✓ put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- ✓ let fresh air into your home by opening windows, doors and air vents as much as possible

DON'T

- ✓ do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean