



# **Attendance Policy with practice and guide for home visits**

<b>Start Date:</b>	<b>Summer 2024</b>
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	<b>Summer 2026</b>
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## **Mission Statement**

We believe that students cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, Haileybury Turnford aims to ensure that all our students take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of all students. Haileybury Turnford believes that excellent attendance and good punctuality are essential to the further enhancement of the school's vision and aims. We believe the foundation of securing good attendance is that our school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where our students will want to be and are keen and ready to learn. We will work in partnership to ensure that all students have the opportunity, through challenge and support, to reach their full academic potential and enjoy maximum benefit from the wide range of educational experiences open to them throughout their school career.

The link between high levels of attendance and maximising learning is undeniable. Students reaching the school targets for attendance and punctuality will have some measure of preparation for responsibilities and experiences of adult and working life. Attendance is a whole school issue. If teaching and learning are to take place successfully, it is essential to create circumstances that make it possible for all members of the Haileybury Turnford community to learn; attendance is therefore essential.

### **Aims/Expectations:**

- To demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.
- To work with students and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.
- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- Acknowledging and rewarding a successful record of attendance.
- Ensuring a consistent approach throughout the school.

### **Attendance Targets/Attendance Registers:**

- To keep the whole school attendance above 96%.
- The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Students Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

### **The Governors of Haileybury Turnford will:**

- Ensure an effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities.
- We offer a clear vision for high attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, students and families.

- Have a clear, written school approach to attendance based on the expectations set out in this policy.
- Regularly review and understand attendance data, discussing and challenging trends and helping school leaders to focus improvement efforts on individual students or cohorts who need it the most within school.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Make sure staff, students and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that students understand its importance.
- Convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing, and wider outcomes. Empower staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- Recognise attendance as a critical area of school improvement. Make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build, and maintain systems and performance.
- Have a designated attendance lead in the senior leadership team with clearly assigned responsibilities identified in the attendance policy, escalation of procedures and school improvement plan.
- Make sure staff receive training/professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively.

#### **The Principal is responsible for:**

- Having a clear, written school attendance policy based on the expectations set out in this policy and ensuring the implementation of this policy – ensuring compliance with DfE Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities – Working together to improve School Attendance – September 2024 - Working together to improve school attendance.
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance – ensuring compliance with the Department for Education’s Keeping Children Safe in Education, Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – September 2024.
- Developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND). Ensuring compliance with Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England December 2015 - Supporting students at school with medical conditions - Supporting students with medical conditions at school.
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance.
- Ensuring accurate completion of admission and attendance registers.
- Ensuring staff are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual students and the student body as a whole.
- Having clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence - students who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and this cohort must be made the top priority for action and support. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues ensuring joint working between the school, children’s social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Often severely absent students have additional needs and therefore it is vital that schools ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the students’ absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.

- Ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- Monitoring and analysing data and trends.
- Reporting to the Governing Body and Trusts the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building and modelling respectful relationships with staff, students, families and other stakeholders to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Open and honest communication with staff, students and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Liaising with other agencies working with students and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Sharing information on and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent.
- Ensuring the school attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently and recognises the individual needs of students and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Schools should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Ensuring all staff members:
  - treat students with dignity
  - build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
  - take into consideration the vulnerability of some students and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
  - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where students can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and students, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity.
  - communicate effectively with families regarding students' attendance and well-being
  - deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new students and families through prospectus and admission/transition events
  - use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
  - regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through regular channels of communication with staff, students and parents
  - establish and monitor implementation of rewards for attendance and punctuality and sanctions for absence and lateness.
- Monitoring implementation of policy and practice, for example through form time, quickly visit, shadow late gate, planner checks.
- Engaging community businesses, partners, and residents to promote attendance and report non-attendance.
- Monitoring of whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of groups and the impact of interventions.
- Establishing and ensuring implementation and robust monitoring of arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME) or at risk of becoming CME.

- Ensuring compliance with guidance regarding Children Missing Education - see Hertfordshire Grid for Learning.
- <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/children-missing-from-education>
- Engaging students in consultation on attendance policy, practice, rewards and sanctions.

**The Vice Principal (Attendance Lead for SLT) is responsible for:**

- Implementing the policy with the Principal.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Championing and improving attendance.
- Ensuring practice is in place to address persistent and severe absence is robust.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Oversight of data analysis:
  - Monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes raising concerns with other agencies like children's social care and early help services which are working with families
  - Robust school systems which provide useful data at cohort, group and individual student level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as:
    - children who have a social worker including looked-after children
    - young carers
    - children who are eligible for free school meals
    - children who speak English as a second language
    - children who have special educational needs and disabilities
  - Keeping the Principal and all school staff informed of attendance figures and trends by providing regular reports to enable them to track the attendance of students and to implement attendance procedures
  - Compiling attendance data for the Principal, the Governing Body and the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO).
- Ensuring a positive working relationship with the LAAO is fostered, including attending Attendance Targeted Support Meetings.
- Communicating messages to students and parents.
- School attendance, safeguarding and pastoral support policies which should clearly outline:
  - the key principles
  - rules students need to follow
  - routines
  - consequence systems.
- If required, holding regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Undertaking home visits in line with school's safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identifying students who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and making the necessary referrals.
- Making sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by students and families, implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.
- The escalation of procedures to address absence needs to be:

- understood by students, parents and carers
- implemented consistently
- reviewed regularly
- ensuring that the Local Authority is notified of any student who fails to attend school regularly via a **10 Day Absence Form**.

**See guidance on Hertfordshire Grid for Learning:**

<https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/attendance-guidance-and-statutory-responsibilities>

**Teaching staff are responsible for:**

- Ensuring the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- Implementing the policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently.
- Ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date;
- Reviewing class and individual attendance patterns;
- Informing the school attendance champion/line manager of any concerns;
- Emphasising with students the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building respectful relationships with staff, students, families and other stakeholders to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Communicating openly and honestly with staff, students and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Holding regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Liaising with other agencies working with students and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Modeling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and students. This will help relationships between students and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:
  - treat students with dignity
  - build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
  - take into consideration the vulnerability of some students and the ways in which this might contribute to absence handling confidential information sensitively
  - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where students can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and students, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
  - communicate effectively with families regarding students' attendance and well-being.

**Teachers should:**

- Rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually.
- Emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment.

- Promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate students to be in the classroom.
- Promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline sanctions
- Apply rewards and sanctions consistently.
- Follow up on absence and lateness with students to identify barriers and reasons for absence.
- Contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality.
- Review form or tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early and help set targets.
- Periodically review practice and consistency both across and between departments.
- Proactively promote attendance practice as part of staff induction
- Consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of students.

**Students at risk of severe or persistent absence – good practice recommendations (this list is not exhaustive):**

- Welcome students back following an absence and provide good catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps. This could include:
  - lesson resources
  - buddy support
  - one to one input
  - meeting with students to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems
  - establishing action plans to remove barriers, provide additional support and set targets. This could include:
    - lunchtime arrangements
    - support with uniform, transport, wake up routines or emotional wellbeing
    - leading daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support
    - making regular contact with families to discuss progress
    - considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups
    - preparing supporting resources to ensure students can access learning when they return
    - developing targeted intervention to address gaps and build students' confidence (including considering small group additional support)
    - contributing to action plans which attendance staff draw together where appropriate
    - providing tailored praise and encouragement when students attend and arrive on time.

**The role of the Attendance Manager, Pastoral Staff and Family Intervention Workers - Expectations:**

- To ensure the recording of attendance and absence data is accurate.
- To ensure robust day-to-day processes are in place.
- To track and follow up absence and poor punctuality (implement punctuality routines such as late gate or sign in procedures).
- Provide appropriate support and challenge to establish good registration practice.
- Carry out robust first day calling procedures including priority routines for vulnerable children including children with a social worker. If absence continues without explanation, further contact should be made to ensure safeguarding.

- Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents to understand why and when the student will return.
- Where absences are recorded as unexplained in the attendance register the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Where possible, ensure the school holds more than one emergency contact number for each student.
- Keep parents informed regularly of their child's attendance and absence record (this should be communicated to parents in an easy-to-understand format and percentage headlines should be avoided). For example, concentrate on the amount of time missed and the impact on the student's learning).
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identify students who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Undertake home visits in line with your safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identify and, where possible, mitigate potential barriers to good attendance in liaison with families and relevant support agencies.
- Implement children missing education (CME) procedures when appropriate -
- See guidance on Hertfordshire Grid for Learning regarding Children Missing Education, <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/children-missing-from-education>
- Where students have additional vulnerabilities, which may require multi-agency meetings, try to arrange those meetings outside of lesson time, where possible.
- Engage with feeder schools or organisations to access absence information in order to identify target cohorts prior to transfer, including mid-year transfers and managed moves.

### **Students at risk of persistent absence:**

- Provide regular attendance reports to tutors to facilitate weekly reviews with leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads) for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
- Initiate and oversee the administration of absence procedures.
- This should include:
  - letters home
  - attendance clinics
  - engagement with local authorities and other external agencies and partners
  - work with families and the community to identify which methods of communication work best, recognising potential barriers in hard-to-reach families and find methods that work and are understood
  - consideration as to whether further interventions are required in line with the statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures
  - providing regular reports to leaders on the at-risk cohort
  - providing regular reports/caseloads to local authority attendance team or independent attendance organisations to raise awareness of emerging at-risk students.



### **Students who are persistently absent:**

- Develop and implement persistent absence action plans with students and families which address barriers and help establish positive attendance routines.
- Identify tailored intervention which meets the needs of the student, for example:
  - mentoring
  - careers advice and guidance input
  - college placement
  - out of hours learning
  - alternative provision where appropriate.
- Lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and impact of support, make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Hold regular meetings or reviews of caseload with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team (SAPT), external partners and alternative providers to check on welfare and review progress.
- Liaise with school leaders (designated safeguarding, special educational needs coordinator and pastoral leads) on referrals to external agencies and multi-agency assessments.
- Coordinate and contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions.
- Work in partnership with SAPT and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures.
- Provide regular reports to leaders on the impact of action plans and interventions.

### **Expectations of Parents:**

- Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.
- Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school. Parents are responsible for:
  - ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance
  - instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
  - impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's Rewards, Behaviour and Discipline Policy, code of conduct and Haileybury Turnford Home-School Agreement
  - informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.30am at the latest.
  - providing the school with an explanation for the absence
  - informing the school of any changes to their contact details
  - taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings
  - working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
  - proactively engaging with the support offered by school to prevent the need for more formal support
  - avoiding arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
  - not booking holidays during term-time

- only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance
- treating staff with respect
- actively supporting the work of the school
- calling on staff for help when they need it
- communicating as early as circumstances which may affect absence or require support.

### **Working with the Local Authority:**

- Our school works in partnership with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance.
- The Principal or Attendance Champion (SLT) will meet with the link LAAO when required to discuss and improve attendance for all persistently absent or severely absent students.
- Action Plans will be developed for all persistently and severely absent students. The school may request support from the LAAO for advice and guidance with the implementation of these action plans.
- If parents do not proactively engage with support offered through the action plan, then formal intervention may be requested from the LAAO.
- If parents do not engage with formal support, the school may request statutory intervention from the Local Authority.
- Statutory intervention can include:
  - Parenting Contract
  - Fixed Penalty Notice application from school
  - Parenting Order
  - Education Supervision Order
  - Prosecution.

### **Encouraging Good Attendance:**

- The school encourages good attendance by using clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance and address absences. It makes sure these systems are inclusive and appropriate for all students.
- Publicising good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body.
- Awarding good attendance certificates to students.
- Offering other school incentives to celebrate good attendance including prizes and stationery gifts etc.

Keeping parents informed regularly of their child's attendance and absence record (this should be communicated to parents in an easy-to-understand format and percentage headlines should be avoided). For example, concentrate on the amount of time missed and the impact on the student's learning).

### **Punctuality:**

- The school gates open at 8.00am. Students must arrive by 8.35am when the school gates close.
- The register will be open for no longer than 30 minutes after the session begins.

- Students who arrive after the register has closed and where the parent provides a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.
- Students who arrive after the register has closed and where the parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (Code U).

The school may arrange a meeting with parents to discuss concerns so that the problem can be addressed.

### **Students at risk of Persistent Absence:**

School is expected to:

- Proactively use data to identify students at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified student and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support parents to access any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
- Take an active part in a multi-agency effort with the Local Authority and other partners if an absence issue persists.
- Act as the Lead Practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service.

Where the Lead Practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the Local Authority and partners.

### **Students who are persistently absent:**

Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 90%. Absenteeism at this level will damage a student's educational prospects and the school will work alongside parents/carers to tackle this issue.

School is expected to:

- Continue support as for students at risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Ensure additional targeted support is in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- If there is lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents, being clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working or being engaged with, work with the Local Authority on legal intervention.
- If there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.
- Work with other local schools, such as schools previously attended or schools of siblings.

### **Students who are severely absent:**

Severe absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 50%.

School is expected to:

- Continue support as for students who are persistently absent.

- Agree a joint approach for all students severely absent with the Local Authority.

**Students who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and teachers must ensure this cohort is made the top priority for action and support.**

**You must be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.**

**Often severely absent students have additional needs and therefore it is vital that school ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the student's absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.**

### **Absence:**

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence.

If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

- Leave of absence can be applied for in advance. It is the school's decision as to whether this is granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence).
- Leave of absence to allow a student to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Principal.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices:**

Our school follows Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice for Truancy Code of Conduct and procedures.

- We expect parents/carers to work with us to address attendance problems.
- If a student has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the Head Teacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days.
- There is no right of appeal by parents against a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance.

**Follow guidance on Hertfordshire Grid for Learning when considering a Fixed Penalty Notice - <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absenceholiday>**

## Part-time Timetables

- As part of the framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers (Ofsted June 2015) local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school age children in their area who are not in receipt of full-time education and schools are similarly expected to maintain data on students of compulsory school age who are on their roll but attending on a part-time timetable.
- The Local authority has published guidance for all maintained school, academies, free schools, studio schools, UTCs, ESCs and PSBs on the use of part-time timetables for students at compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday).
- All schools are required to return information on children who are on part-time tables within five days of the student starting or ending a part-time timetable.

**Follow guidance from Hertfordshire Grid for Learning when considering a part-time timetable** - <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/attendance-part-time-students>

## Monitoring

We believe this policy will be effective only if it is consistently monitored across the whole school.

## Further resources:

### Statutory guidance

- [School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures](#)
- [Children missing education](#)
- [Supporting students with medical conditions at school](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education](#)
- [School exclusion](#)

## Guidance and resources

- [National statistics: Pupil absence in schools in England](#)

## **Appendix A**

### **Attendance Policy Haileybury Turnford Practice and Guide for Home Visits**

#### **Introduction**

This document defines the agreed processes and minimum safeguarding requirements to see students 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 with the risk assessment in Annex A.

This document is not relevant to 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 students who is absent from school from the first day of absence where this is without notice from the parents, is 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 Manager
- Family Support Worker
- Health Visitor / School Nurse
- Services for Young People (SfYP) Personal Advisor / Youth Offending Team Officer / Youth Worker / Mentor
- Social Worker or other Social Care staff
- Police Officer

Others who may see a student out of school include staff from private, voluntary, or independent sectors.

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, particularly friends of the students 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 students have not been seen by a reliable person, the school should undertake a risk assessment to decide about whether a Home Visit and welfare check is necessary. The following guidance is provided 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 the 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 students are 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 students and/or parents to resolve the situation to facilitate a return to school.
3. **Continuing unauthorised absence and no reason to believe students is at any particular risk:** where reasons for refusal to attend have been established and attempts made to date to re-engage the students have failed, where no information has become known to cause any concern beyond the concern caused by the absence. Relevant services listed above should be informed of the students' 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 Local Authority 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 students 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 for a school to refer to the Attendance Team after 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 students:** 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 become known leading to concern.

### **C. 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 students being seen, or where there is no answer at the address and neighbors are not able to confirm a recent sighting of the child, and there are concerns about the students' 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 students 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, this could place the child at risk.

### **D. 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, 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 staff members: The Attendance Officer and a pastoral team member such as the Assistant Year Achievement Coordinator or an administrative team member. Cover arrangements should be made to ensure two staff members are available to make the visit if 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 does a child have sporadic absences which continuously recur? Is there 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, even though 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 because 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 does not know where the child is, if they left for school and did not arrive, the parent and school report the child as missing to the Police unless the child has recent history of truanting 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 students 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 a child has an allocated Social Worker CIN/child protection procedure should be followed.
- If neither of the above applies, 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 in places other than their usual home address?**

- If students are 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 when students turn 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 for under 16s.

**10. What should happen where there is extremely 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 not met relevant thresholds. The most appropriate professional should work towards engaging the parent/students 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 the attention of school staff first, then yes. If another service, if they are in school, they should report to the school designated senior lead (DSL) or appointed deputy. If out of school, the agency/service should follow their own agency's procedures and report in the 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 do 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 students are 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 (Students 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 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 were the students 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:

<b>Assess Risk:</b> 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 students' 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 including info from staff/students/others:

<b>Assess Risk:</b> low / medium / high
---

If **there is minimal risk and between 5 - 10 days of absence**, consider referral to AIO if not already involved. If **considerable 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 students is safe, or
- School has information from other students/parents that leads them to believe that students is safe, or
- School has no information despite attempts to contact family/emergency contact/s, this is a regular pattern for the students and there have previously been no safeguarding concerns about the students.

### **MEDIUM RISK:**

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

### **HIGH RISK:**

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

### **THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS:**

As part of the decision-making process as to whether a case is low, medium, or considerable 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 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 the 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 Clearly stating the following:

Your Child's Name and Year Group:

Date of Absence:

Reason for Absence:

Yours sincerely

**Attendance Manager**

## ANNEX C

### UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE FORM

#### **Notification of Students Absence: 10 consecutive days unexplained absence or irregular attendance.**

The Education (Students 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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Students Name: UPN:
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Date of Birth:	Year Group:	Ethnicity:
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Home Address
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Parent names and contact details
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Details of absence: <b>Please attach print out of students' Attendance Register</b> <b>Please state what action school are taking to address attendance concern:</b>	
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 students' 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 contact 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 a secure email system i.e. Schools or Herts FX to:**

[AttendanceDutyEast@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:AttendanceDutyEast@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

[AttendanceDutyWest@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto: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?			
<b>Score:</b> 3 marks per 'Yes' response 2 marks per 'Unknown' response 1 mark per 'No' response			
<b>Total:</b>			

<p><b>Total marks:</b></p> <p>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</p> <p>Other comments or reasoning for different measures being taken:</p>
--