



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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**Signed – Governor**

.....  
**Print Name**

**Date:** March 2016

**Review:** June 2017

## 1. MISSION STATEMENT

- 1.1 Falconer School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his true potential. **Our strategic objectives aim for an average rate of 97%.**
- 1.2 The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.
- 1.3 All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.
- 1.4 The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- 1.5 To meet these objectives Falconer School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents/carers and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

## 2. AIMS

- To improve the overall percentage of students at school
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents/carers, teachers and governors
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and students
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions
- To promote effective partnerships with the Education Social Work Service and with other services and agencies
- To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

## 3. PARENTAL RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

- *Parents/carers are responsible in law for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance*
- *Parents/carers are responsible for informing the school of the reason for any absence (by letter, phone call or personal visit) on the first morning of any absence*
- *Parents/carers can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's progress*
- *Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children stay at school once they have registered*

## 4. REGISTRATION (INCLUDING LATENESS)

- 4.1 *Registers will be taken punctually each day unless informed at 8:30am and at 2:00pm. Morning registers close at 8.40am. Afternoon registers close at 2.05pm. Students should be in their tutor/teaching areas before these times and seated. Each student should be called by name and should respond in the prescribed formal manner. If a student arrives after the registers close he should sign-in at the main office*
- 4.2 *All staff should take a register in each lesson. If there is concern about a particular student's attendance an announcement will be made in morning briefing by Home Liaison Team or the Assistant Head teacher.*

## **5. AUTHORISED / UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

**5.1** *The school decides whether an absence will be authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the student to be away, or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the school can do this. Should School staff have reason to doubt that the explanation offered about a particular absence is genuine, the absence should be treated as unauthorised. This decision must be made and communicated to parents/carers by the School.*

**5.2** *Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:*

- *Sickness*
- *Medical/dental appointments*
- *Days of religious observance*
- *Exceptional family circumstances – bereavement*

**5.3** *Absence from school will not be authorised for:*

- *Unsatisfactory explanations (e.g. shopping, minding the house etc)*
- *Caring for sick siblings or parents/carers*
- *Birthdays*

**5.4** *Falconer School will emphasise to parents/carers that all medical/dental appointments should be made outside school hours.*

*Parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays and should be advised to apply to the school for permission in advance of any such holiday. Forms can be obtained from main office*

## **6. PERSISTENT ABSENCE**

Persistent absence (PA) is absence of 20% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee therefore if his attendance is less than 80%, regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised.

## **7. FIRST DAY RESPONSE**

Falconer operates a First Day Response system. Any student who is registered as absent without an explanation will receive a text/phone call to their parents/carers before 11.00am to report that their child is not at school. This will be followed up by a phone call if the parent does not respond to provide a reason. It is the parent/carers' responsibility to ensure they call the absence line to report any absence before the start of the school day.

## **8. TRUANCY**

Falconer School recognises that a student may truant from school or particular lessons for a variety of reasons.

Truancy is recorded as an unauthorised absence. A number of systems are put in place to inform students that this behaviour is unacceptable. Through investigation, if necessary, support will be offered to the student who has truanted from a lesson. Parents/carers will always be informed and an appropriate sanction will be put in place. A record will be made for the student's file.

Spot attendance checks are made regularly. These may focus on a particular year group if there is a concern. All information will be fed back to the home liaison team and ultimately to the Assistant Head teacher. Home liaison team/ teacher will be involved if there is a difficulty concerning a curriculum area. The student will be monitored.

## **Penalty Notices**

A Penalty Notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a student fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation. A student's absence must have been unauthorised for a least 21 sessions (one session is half a day either am or pm) in the previous and/or current term. **Penalty Notices will involve a parent paying a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days.**

Failure to pay the fine within **28 days** will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply). Prosecution will be taken by the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996, section 444.

The issuing of Penalty Notices will comply with the code of conduct and practice as determined by the Local Authority.

## **9. THE ROLE OF THE Attendance Officer**

### **Daily:**

- Produce a daily Absence Report on sims
- Make calls to students marked as absent
- Record findings on Absence Report (sims) and take appropriate action
- Inform HLT manager of concerns.
- PM – Check the registers for absences

### **Weekly:**

- Produce attendance reports for the Headteacher
- Percentage Attendance spreadsheet
- Assist Head teacher in analysis of trends and appropriate strategies.

## **10. ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT OFFICER**

The fundamental purpose of the AIO is to maximise attendance rates for individual students, individual schools and for the county of Hertfordshire as a whole and discharge the County Council's legal duty to ensure that all students of compulsory school age are in receipt of suitable education. AIOs will also assist in removing barriers which may prevent a child receiving education.

Referrals to the AIO will be made by the school once it feels it has exhausted all other avenues to improve attendance. The AIO will meet with Attendance officer and home liaison manager during visits to the school to monitor students whose attendance is a cause for concern.

## **11. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY**

In the belief that all students are more likely to attend regularly if the Teaching and Learning is of a high standard and the curriculum meets their needs. This curriculum will be regularly reviewed:

- The curriculum will be monitored and developed to meet the needs of all students. Learning Mentors will utilise their non contact session to monitor individual student needs.
- Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices. These will be shared with the Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher.
- The school will offer rewards to all students and tutor groups whose attendance/punctuality is either excellent or much improved.
- Students whose attendance falls beneath 90% will be set targets for improvement. These targets will be regularly reviewed by the tutor/HLT/AIO and if deemed necessary the Deputy Head teacher.
- Good attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded through weekly awards made by the Headteacher for tutor groups with 100% attendance.

- Regular structured meetings will be held with the school's Attendance Improvement Officer in order to identify and support those students whose attendance/punctuality is a source of concern.
- Parents/carers will be kept regularly and fully informed of all concerns around attendance and punctuality.
- Annual reports will be made by the attendance officer/HLT manager to the school's governing body on the issue of attendance/punctuality
- Students are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance via VLE and Assemblies.
- Students who have been absent for any extended period of time will be re-integrated back into school through a structured and individually-tailored programme.
- All issues which may cause a student to experience attendance difficulties are to be promptly investigated by the form tutor/Home liaison team. Attendance is reported in every student's report.
- Bar charts showing tutor group attendance will be displayed in every year area.
- Prizes for excellent attendance will be rewarded at our annual award ceremony.
- There will be an end of term raffle in every year group to reward good/excellent/improving attendance.

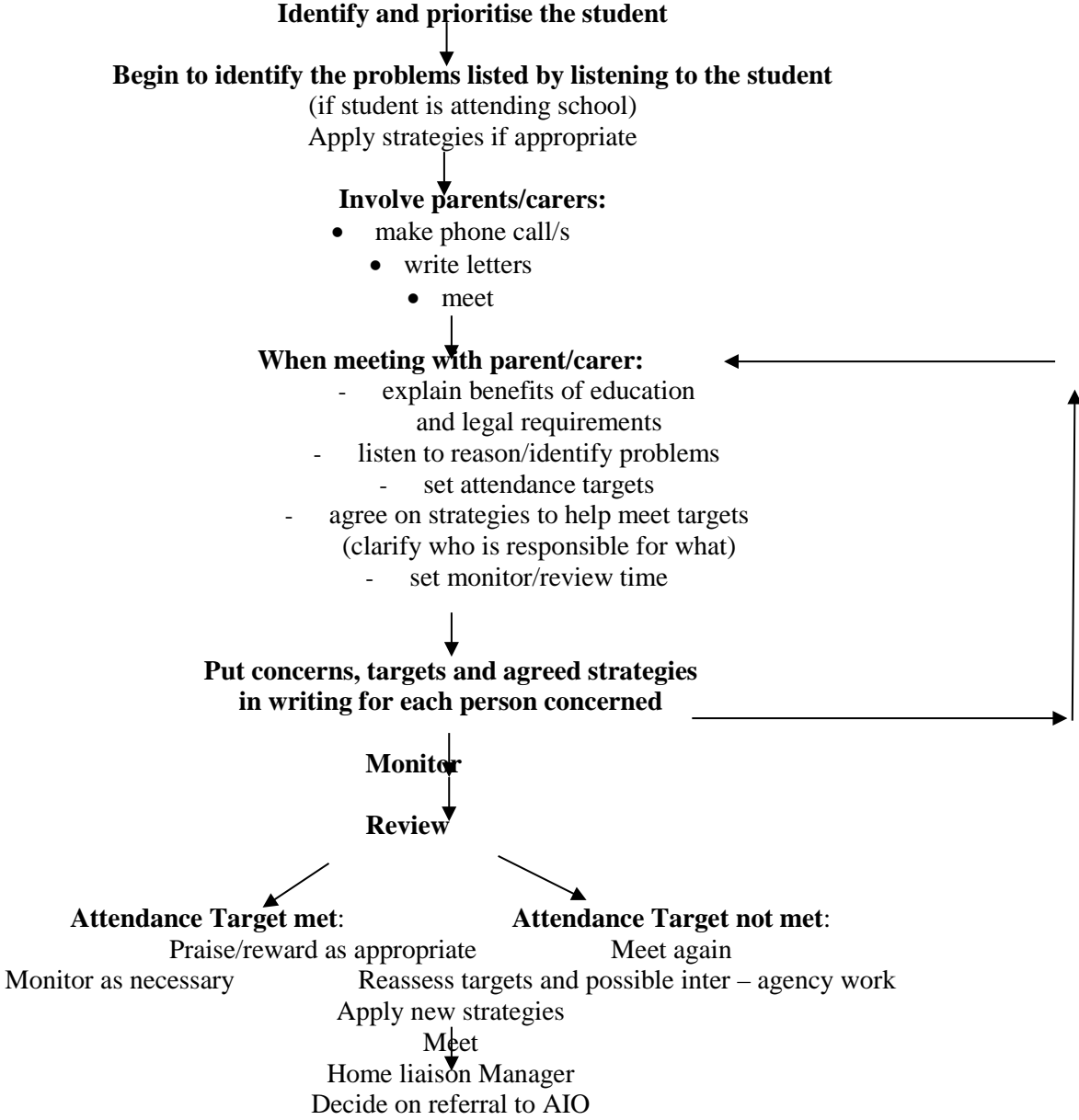
## 12. IN SCHOOL ACTION

### How can it be used?

- The flow chart below suggests a process of in-school action that may lead to an improvement in attendance.
- A new sheet should be used for each student whose attendance is causing concern.
- Sheets should be kept in file for each year group, and files kept in a central location so all members of staff involved with addressing the attendance have access to see and update the sheets. Files can then be brought to the AIO consultation visits by attendance Officer, so that progress can be discussed and advice sought.
- We recommend that intervention begins with the tutor/attendance officer, and progresses to involve Home liaison Manager, and Senior Staff (such as Deputy Headteacher) if appropriate.
- The member of staff who undertakes any intervention should indicate this has been done on the sheet (tick, date and brief comment, or attach any notes or record made). All relevant letters to and from parents/carers etc. should also be kept with the sheet in the Year file for easy reference.
- If all attempts have proved unsuccessful and the AIO accepts the student as a referral, the sheet and attachments (or copies of) will go to the AIO.
- Improved attendance across the board, as concerns spotted tend to be addressed more quickly.
- Prevention of some entrenched non-attendance, as it should prevent the 'drift' that tends to happen if no process is followed. Any deterioration should here be met by further action.
- All staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and will be aware who has already done what. (Information kept together and accessible, rather than attendance officer not knowing what, if anything, the form tutor has done).
- Consultation visits should be more focused and productive, since it will be clear what has already been done, and time can be spent deciding on further action and over more 'difficult' cases.
- When the AIO accepts a student as a referral, the information provided on the sheet and attachments will assist the AIO in making accurate assessment, ensure that the family sees that school and AIO are in good communication and prevent duplication of work. The information will also enable more efficient court action, if appropriate.

**Falconer School:  
Action: Process**

Please tick or note this flowchart to indicate action taken



This sheet is for use with each child whose attendance is causing concern. The flow chart suggests a process of school action which may lead to an improvement in attendance. Intervention is likely to start with class/form tutor and progress as appropriate. Please tick, date or make a brief comment against the actions taken. The list of suggested strategies on the reverse of the sheet provides an aide memoire, and a record of school interventions.

**Appendix One**

This sheet can be used during consultation visits with the Attendance Improvement Officer to assist in the discussion of progress and future action. When making a referral to the AIO it would be helpful if this could be provided, along with copies of all relevant paperwork (letters, meetings, records, IEP's etc).

## Falconer School Strategies

Strategy	Comments on strategy	Dates (from/to)
Provision		
Targeted first day response		
Assistance to catch up with work		
Link person/mentor		
Modification of curriculum/timetable		
Positive reporting		
Safe haven in school		
Staged reintegration		
Change of tutor group		
Buddy (peer)		
Assign special responsibility/task suited to student		
'Time Out' card		
Counselling		
Refer to other agencies		
Extra-curricular activities		
IEP		
Additional careers advice		
Work experience		
Pastoral Support Programme		
Use of peer counsellor		
Incentives		
Attendance charts		
On attendance report		
Customised reward/privilege		
Letter from Headteacher		
Involving Parents/carers		
Highlight benefits of good attendance		
Remind of legal responsibility re attendance		
Remind of school attendance policy		
Ask parent/carer to phone school by (eg.) 9am on day of absence		
Ask parent/carer to bring student to designated person in school each day		
Explain to parent/carer that absence will not be authorised		
Letter from AIO to parent/carer (not referral : emphasise concerns, support school action etc)		
Request GP certificate/letter from parent		
Write to GP		
Liaise with link support		

# Children's Services

## LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICY ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

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## **1. Introduction**

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for individual children, individual schools and for Hertfordshire as a whole. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to openness and equality of opportunity in every activity, from the way we employ staff to the way we deliver services. It is a central responsibility of members, managers and employees of the County Council to ensure that every individual that we come into contact with is treated with dignity and respect.

This Attendance Policy is intended to guide, assist and empower schools to meet their responsibilities and to provide an agreed framework within which consistent practices and procedures can be applied.

## **2. Statement of Intent**

Hertfordshire County Council expects the Children's Services and all schools to work closely together in partnership with parents/carers in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all students.

## **3. Responsibilities – Parents/carers and Carers**

Parents/carers 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/carers fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents/carers whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents/carers should:-

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy of their children's school
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents/carers' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify their child's school if he is absent. This should be done as soon as possible - preferably on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the child returns to school
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- avoid booking holidays during term time

## **4. Responsibilities - Schools**

Schools are responsible for supporting the attendance of their students and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance.

Schools are required to call attendance registers at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and to record whether students are present, absent or on an approved educational activity.

For students of compulsory school age, schools are required to differentiate in the registers between absence that is authorised and absence that is unauthorised.

Schools should:-

- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual students and for the student body as a whole - as one of their key tasks
- have clear policies in place to address persistent absence
- support parents/carers in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of students and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents/carers and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. Schools should recognise that some parents/carers have difficulty understanding written communications. They should also recognise the reluctance of some parents/carers to come into school.
- Produce school attendance policies which are consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents/carers, students and staff

A school attendance policy should:-

- ensure that legal requirements are met
- give a high priority to attendance and punctuality
- name the SMT member with overall responsibility for attendance
- identify clear channels of communication with parents/carers
- ensure that up-to-date attendance data is available
- identify what is considered as authorised/unauthorised absence
- make provision for first-day of absence contact
- contain clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence
- prioritise the importance of early intervention
- identify a range of strategies to deal with absenteeism
- be alert to critical times ( e.g. secondary transfer )
- be sensitive to individual students' needs
- promote the setting of targets for individual students, form groups etc.
- establish systems for rewarding good/improved attendance
- establish procedures for re-integrating long-term absentees
- provide for regular meetings between the school and its allocated Attendance Improvement Officer

- establish clear lines of communication with outside agencies
- ensure that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness
- provide for effective primary-secondary liaison
- inform and involve governors
- ensure that good practice is identified and disseminated
- explain how attendance information will be shared with parents/carers (newsletters etc)
- be reviewed at regular intervals
- make clear to parents/carers that it is the school - not the parent - which authorises an absence.
- make clear to parents/carers what is, and is not, acceptable as reasons for absence
- state how lateness, both before and after closure of registers, is recorded and monitored
- make clear that leave is granted only in exceptional circumstances
- address attendance from a whole school perspective. The link between attendance and achievement should be actively promoted
- encourage all staff - including ancillary and administrative staff - to see attendance as part of their responsibility
- actively address all issues - such as bullying – which may lead to non-attendance
- explain that their allocated Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) will be notified of any student of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly

## **5. Responsibilities – ISL Attendance Team**

The ISL Attendance Team fulfils the statutory duty of the County Council in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents/carers to meet their respective responsibilities.

### **Academies**

The ISL Attendance Team offers a traded service to academies to support attendance. For further details contact the relevant Attendance Team Manager. Separate guidance is available for Academies undertaking their own attendance casework who wish to request legal action and is available at [www.thegrid.org.uk](http://www.thegrid.org.uk)

### **Maintained Schools**

Each maintained school in Hertfordshire will be allocated an Attendance Improvement Officer who will work in close partnership with the school.

In working closely with schools the Attendance Improvement Officer will offer the following services:-

### **Consultation Visits**

Consultation visits by the AIO will be allocated according to need. Need will be identified using the school annual DfE Absence data. The purpose of the consultation visit will be to:-

- identify students who are experiencing attendance difficulties. This will include the regular examination of attendance registers

- agree on focused, time-limited action which needs to be taken by the school and/or the AIO. Before accepting a referral the AIO will expect school staff to have first undertaken some preliminary work themselves, eg action by the class teacher or year head, contact with parents/carers, etc
- feed back and exchange information in relation to work which has been undertaken by the AIO and/or the school
- identify areas of concern and of good practice in relation to attendance matters
- advise the school on strategies for improving attendance
- assist schools in identifying PA students and those at risk of becoming PA and ensuring that effective plans of action are in place

### **Casework**

- AIOs may undertake early intervention (pre-referral) work prior to a case being accepted. This may include the following:
  - telephoning or writing to the parents/carers about their child's absences or lateness
  - attending a meeting with parents/carers arranged by the school to emphasise the need for good attendance and the possibility that, if there is no improvement, the AIO will become formally involved.

Once a case has been accepted, the AIO will undertake direct work with students and their parents/carers. This can include:

- arranging meetings between the school, parents/carers and students
- making home visits to assess the situation and determine what action needs to be taken
- offering specific support to parents/carers and individual students, either at school or elsewhere
- facilitating meetings
- enabling the student and parents/carers to access appropriate support from other services and agencies through the use of Integrated Practice/Common Assessment process

The AIO may also arrange for the student to receive specialist support such as counselling or group work.

Attendance Improvement Officers will usually work with children whose absences have not been authorised. However, AIOs may work with children whose absences have been authorised (see appendix 1).

### **In-service training for school staff**

Attendance Improvement Officers will offer, or assist with, INSET sessions on a range of subjects related to the attendance or welfare of students, including:-

- the promotion of regular school attendance
- working effectively with the AIO
- addressing persistent absence
- legal responsibilities relating to school attendance

## 6. The Use of Legal Action

If a parent fails to register a child of compulsory school age at a school (and he does not intend to educate the child otherwise than at school). The LA will serve a School Attendance Order under Sections 437 - 439 of the Education Act 1996.

If a student, who is registered at a school, fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Improvement Officer and the school fail to secure that student's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action. A complaint may be laid against the parents/carers in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the student under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the student's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Behaviour and Attendance. If 'exceptional mitigating circumstances' are not deemed to exist then cases which remain open for more than 24 weeks will be referred for legal action. Legal action will, however, be taken earlier when appropriate.

If, after legal action has been taken, the child still fails to attend school regularly the AIO will keep the case open and will, if appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date.

In cases where parents/carers wilfully withhold a student from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the ISL Attendance Team will promptly begin legal proceedings on the grounds that no other course of action is available.

The Central Attendance & Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Behaviour and Attendance will give approval before legal proceedings are commenced.

The Attendance Team will consider applying for an Education Supervision Order when a parent finds it difficult to exercise an effective influence over a child who has developed a pattern of poor attendance. Education Supervision Orders will not usually be applied for in relation to students in Years 10 or 11.

Before an application is made for an Education Supervision Order:

- other possible means of dealing with the student's poor attendance will be explored
- the attitudes of the parent and student towards the poor attendance, and their wishes as to how it should be dealt with, will be noted
- the AIO will be of the view that the Order will have a significant effect on the student's attendance at school

## 7. Penalty Notices for Parents/carers of Truants

Subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added two new sections (444A and 444B) to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These new sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents/carers to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy, where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. For example it could be used where a parent has failed to engage in any supportive measures. It is particularly useful as a sanction at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched and where the Local Authority considers that a prosecution would not be appropriate as a first action.

Further information on penalty notices is available at [www.thegrid.org.uk](http://www.thegrid.org.uk) administration/student welfare/attendance or from the local Attendance Team Manager.

## **8. Attendance Registers**

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Student Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 as amended 2010, 2011 and 2013. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Registers must be taken at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. If the register is called at the end of the afternoon session schools should ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to ensure that students do not leave school between registrations. They should ensure that students can be accounted for in an emergency and that a student removed from the school at lunchtime will not go unnoticed.

Registers must record whether each student is present; attending an approved educational activity; absent; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. In the case of a student of compulsory school age who is absent the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

Registers should open and close at regular, set times and this information should be contained in the school's attendance policy. HCC recommends that registers should not be kept open for longer than 30 minutes.

When calling the register the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each student's name - gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, schools should use the national set of symbols as advised by the Department for Education (see Appendix 2)

When the reason for a student's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

Entries in manual registers should be written in red or black ink and any correction made in such a manner that the original entry and the correction are both clearly distinguishable (Tippex should not be used).

In order to reduce the possibility of post registration truancy secondary schools are encouraged to take class registers in each lesson and/or carry out regular spot checks.

All schools are required to notify the Local Authority of any student of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason. This duty also extends to academies.

### **Deletion from Roll**

A student's name may not be deleted from the attendance register unless it has also been deleted from the admissions register. Full details are contained in regulation 8 of The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) When a student's name is removed from the admissions register the school must notify their local Attendance Team. This duty extends to academies.

A student of compulsory school age should have his/her name deleted from the admissions register when:

- the student is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a School Attendance Order and another school is substituted by the LA for that named in the Order or the Order is revoked
- the student has been registered at another school. (Schools can register Traveller children even if they are on the roll of another school. The school the child normally attends is the base school; the other registration is temporary)
- the school has received written notification from the parent that they are educating the student themselves. (Elective Home Education)
- the student has ceased to attend the school and no longer lives within a reasonable distance of the school

- in the case of a student granted leave of absence, the student has failed to attend the school within the 10 school days immediately following the last day of absence which was granted and the school is not satisfied that the student is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause and both the school and the local authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry to locate him/her
- the student is certified by the School Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- the student has been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days, the absence is unauthorised, *and* there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause *and* both the school and the AIO have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate him/her
- the student is serving a custodial sentence of four months or longer and the head teacher does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student will return at the end of that period
- the student has died
- the student will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets *and* the relevant person has indicated that the student will cease to attend the school *or* the student does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form. (All registered students are required to remain at school until the leaving date - last Friday in June. "At school" includes for these purposes approved educational activities undertaken off site, including work experience).
- the student has been permanently excluded and the exclusion has been upheld
- the student has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education and has not on completing such education transferred to a reception class at the school
- the student attends a special school and the LA gives consent for his/her name to be removed
- the student is a boarder at a maintained school or Academy and charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the student; and the charges remain unpaid by the student's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.

If a school is told that a student is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure should establish the student's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the student will start there. Confirmation should then be sought from the receiving school. When this information has been obtained, the school should complete form EWN1 and return it to the local Attendance Team office. Whenever a student leaves a school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.

If a school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a student has "disappeared" the matter should be drawn without delay to the attention of the Children Missing Education Officer by telephoning 01992 556867 or by written referral to CME Officer, Central Attendance & Employment Support Team, Room 134, CHO 135, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DF.

Further guidance and a referral form is available at [www.thegrid.org.uk](http://www.thegrid.org.uk) administration/student welfare/attendance.

### **Responsibilities of the AIO – Attendance Registers**

If the allocated AIO is concerned that a school's registers have not been kept in accordance with the requirements of the relevant regulations he will:

- notify the headteacher of the concern and suggest that the matter is addressed
- if no appropriate action is taken by the school, and the AIO remains concerned, the Attendance Team Manager will address the concern with the headteacher



- if the matter still remains unresolved, the Attendance Team Manager will write to the Headteacher formally noting the concern. A copy of this letter will be sent to the relevant ISL Area Manager and the County Lead for Behaviour and Attendance.

### **Registers- Retention**

Registers should be kept in a secure place for a period of not less than 3 years.

When computerised registration systems are used a print-out of the register should be made not less than once a month. A print-out of the register relating to a particular school year should be bound in a single volume and retained for a period of not less than 3 years.

Registers should be made available for inspection by Attendance Improvement Officers when requested.

### **9. Punctuality**

Schools should take steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness should be monitored and followed up.

School policies and brochures should clearly state the time at which each school session begins and finishes, including the time at which registers open and close.

School should not keep a register open for the whole session.

When a student arrives late and the register is still open he should be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.

When a student arrives after the register has closed and provides a satisfactory explanation, he should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code.

When a student arrives after the register has closed and fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he should be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. (Code U)

When a student arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site should be noted in a book in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation, etc.

### **10. Authorising 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 should be treated as unauthorised.

Schools should communicate to parents/carers their policies with regard to the notification and categorisation of absence. Some parents/carers, such as those whose first language is not English or who do not read or write may experience difficulty in providing notes. In such cases schools should seek to make alternative arrangements.

Schools are encouraged to keep all absence notes for at least a term and when a student's absence is a cause for concern to retain the notes until there is no longer a concern.

### **Absence should be authorised if:**

- the student is absent with leave (defined as ‘leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school’)
- the student is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parent belongs
- the school at which the child is a registered student is not within walking distance of the child’s home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA for any of the following: the child’s transport to and from school; boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school; enabling the child to become a registered student at a school nearer to his/her home
- the student is the child of Traveller parents/carers who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student is attending alternative provision
- there is a close family bereavement
- a Year 11 student is granted study leave (this should not normally exceed 10 school days)
- leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application. (Parents/carers should be reminded that they cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence)
- leave of absence should be granted to allow a student to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (c) 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 head teacher.
- Absence should be unauthorised if no explanation is forthcoming from the parents/carers or if the school is dissatisfied with the explanation

### **11. Administrative Codes**

There are a number of administrative codes which are not counted as a possible attendance in the school census. They must only be used in the circumstances described:

#### **Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (Code Y)**

This code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes but is not counted as a possible attendance It may be used when:

the school site, or part of it is closed due to unavoidable cause; or

the transport provided by the school or the local authority is not available *and* where the student’s home is not within walking distance; or

a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the student from attending school

#### **Not required to be in school (Code X)**

is used to record sessions that non –compulsory school age children are not expected to attend

#### **Student not on admission register (Code Z)**

enables schools to set up registers in advance of students joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put students on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school.

### **Planned whole of partial school closure (Code #)**

should be used for closures that are planned or known in advance eg holidays, curriculum planning/training days (up to five per year) or the use of the school as a polling station

### **Different Term Dates for Different Students (Code #)**

can also be used to record staggered starts or induction days. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that students not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school year.

## **12. Approved Off-Site Educational Activity**

Students who are engaged in off-site educational activities should be recorded as attending (or absent from) an approved educational activity using the appropriate code.

The key features of approved educational activity are that they must be:

- educational *and*
- approved by the school *and*
- supervised by the school or someone authorised by the school

(Study leave is NOT an approved educational activity)

A student should be recorded as approved educational activity if he is attending:

- an approved work experience placement (Code W)
- a field trip or educational visit (Code V)
- an approved sporting activity approved by and supervised by someone authorised by the school (Code P)
- the student is attending an interview with a prospective employer, or another educational establishment (Code J)
- an off site educational activity (Code B)

Note: The B code must not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a student is at home doing school work. Schools are ultimately responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of students educated off-site. In using the B code schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard students.

Dual Registered – at another educational establishment (Code D)

Note: This code is used to indicate that the student was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school census. This code should be used where students are attending as ESC, hospital or special school on a temporary basis or for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are known to be registered at another school for the session in question.

Each school should only record the attendance/absence for those sessions where the student is expected to attend. Schools must ensure that they follow up all absence in a timely manner.

### **Consortia Schools**

Students attending consortia schools as part of their course need only be placed on the registers of their main school. They should be treated as “guest students” at the other consortia school/s. The “host” school must have robust systems in place to monitor and report the absence and attendance of “guest students” and this must be shared with the main school.

Schools should ensure that in the event of a fire drill or other emergency evacuation they are able to carry out an immediate headcount as to the number of students physically present on-site.

### **13. Flexi-schooling**

Head teachers can agree to flexi-schooling arrangements where the parents/carers take on the responsibility for their child's education for part of the school week. Head teachers are advised to consider any such requests from parents/carers very carefully before agreeing to them and are advised to draw up a written agreement with the parent. Where agreement has been reached, students should be marked authorised absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education. (C)

### **14. Part-time time-tables**

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual student's needs. A part time timetable must be time limited and must not be treated as a long term solution. The school should mark the sessions were the student is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (C)

### **15. Requests for Family Holidays During Term time**

Amendments to the 2006 Student Registration (England) Regulations which come into effect on 1st September 2013 remove all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is for the headteacher to determine what constitutes exceptional circumstances and for them to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

At the request from headteachers the local authority has provided a standard letter to be handed to parents/carers and carers to support the governing body and headteachers in communicating their decision making regarding individual requests for leave of absence for holidays in term time. This is available on [www.thegrid.uk](http://www.thegrid.uk)

Further information and advice of school attendance including the use of the correct registration codes is available at [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

The Education (Student Registration) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments in 2010, 2011 and 2013 is available at [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

Further details information and advice on all aspects of school attendance in Hertfordshire is available at [www.thegrid.uk](http://www.thegrid.uk) school/ administration/student welfare/attendance

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Policy for Attendance Improvement Officers working with children whose absence has been authorised**

- if the AIO becomes concerned (through checking the attendance register) that a student has accumulated significant amounts of authorised absence this will be discussed with the relevant member of school staff
- if it is agreed that there is a concern about the student's attendance the school should share this concern with the parents/carers
- if concerns about the student's attendance remain, the AIO will consider accepting the case
- AIO will give priority to those cases when the absence has been unauthorised

(Note: if a student's absence has been authorised by the school the LA cannot cite that absence as evidence of non attendance under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.)

## ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Present at off site educational activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registered at another educational establishment	Not expected to attend this session
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age students)	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Student not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to all students (Planned)	Not counted in possible attendances

Detailed advice on the use of these registration codes can be found at [www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance](http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance)

## **Local Code of Conduct – Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence (Truancy)**

### ***Introduction***

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers the police, designated Local Authority Officers and Headteachers and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence (truancy) of pupils of statutory school age.

The government requires Local Authorities to issue a Code of Conduct to which all parties involved must adhere. Penalty notices may be issued only in accordance with the terms of the Code of Conduct.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that:

- the powers are applied consistently and fairly
- duplicate notices are not issued
- issuing a notice does not conflict with proceedings proposed or being taken by the Local Authority under section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the penalty notice scheme.

### ***The Law***

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added sections 444A and 444B to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for that offence by paying a penalty. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set out the framework for the operation of the scheme.

All those defined as a parent under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 are considered to be parents for the purpose of these provisions.

As with prosecutions under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence in respect of each child.

Penalty notices apply to parents of children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at maintained schools, academies, Pupil Referral Units (Education Support Centres), City Technology Colleges, Studio Schools, UTCs and any other alternative education provision arranged under section 19 of The Education Act 1996.

Parents cannot be prosecuted for the offence for which the penalty notice was issued until after the final deadline for payment has passed and the penalty remains unpaid. Parents cannot be convicted of that offence if the penalty is paid in accordance with the notice.

The Local Authority will retain any revenue from penalty notices to cover the administration of the scheme and any legal actions arising from it.

## ***Rationale***

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for pupils registered at schools, academies or other maintained or alternative provision.

A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances of unauthorised absence where the school considers a parent is capable of securing their child's regular attendance. It may be particularly effective at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched.

## ***Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued***

- Penalty notices may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
- The pupil must have at least **15 sessions** (half days) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term
- The school must have sent a formal warning to the parent
- The school/academy/police or Attendance Improvement Officer considers that issuing a penalty notice could avoid further absence
- Issuing a penalty notice does not conflict with any other legal action being taken
- A maximum of **two** separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent within any twelve month period
- Penalty notices will be issued for pupils of compulsory school age, up to the end of the spring term of year 11
- A penalty notice will not be issued in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority without the prior agreement of the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Attendance

## ***Responsibilities of the Local Authority for issuing penalty notices***

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority and may not be delegated. Schools, academies and the police may issue penalty notices if they wish to do so but any notices issued by them **must** comply with the Local Authority Code of Conduct and a copy of any penalty notice issued must be provided to the Local Authority.

In Hertfordshire all parties agree that the Integrated Service for Learning Attendance Teams administer the scheme and issue penalty notices on behalf of police, schools, academies and other settings to ensure fairness and consistency and in the event that subsequent legal action may need to be taken.

The Local Authority receives applications to issue penalty notices from schools, academies and the police. Penalty notices will be issued provided that:

- the circumstances of the absence meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct
- the information is provided in the specified manner
- the request is received not more than 10 school days after the final absence cited

The Local Authority retains revenue from the scheme to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices and prosecuting recipients who do not pay.



### ***Appealing against the issue of penalty notices***

There is no statutory right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued. The Local Authority may withdraw a notice if it has been issued incorrectly. If the penalty notice has been issued in accordance with Hertfordshire's Code of Conduct there is no facility to overturn the decision to issue the notice.

### ***Effect of issuing penalty notices***

If the penalty is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it the Local Authority named in the notice shall either institute proceedings against the recipient for the offence or shall withdraw the notice.

### ***Payment of penalty notices***

The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.

Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.

Penalty notices are sent by first class post and are deemed to have been received on the second day after posting.

Arrangements for payment are detailed on the penalty notice and payment by cheque, postal order and by debit/credit card is accepted.

### ***Withdrawal of penalty notices***

The Local Authority may only withdraw penalty notices in circumstances where it determines that the notice:

- has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct
- ought not to have been issued
- ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient
- has not been paid but it is not appropriate to prosecute the recipient for the offence

### ***Prosecution of unpaid penalty notices***

If the notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority