



Absence Policy

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1	Background.....	3
2	Related Policies	3
3	Terminology	3
4	Aim	3
4.1	Statutory Framework.....	3
5	Responsibilities of Parents	4
6	Responsibilities of Students	5
7	Responsibilities of the School	5
8	Registration Procedure – the Senior School.....	6
8.1	Morning Registration.....	6
8.2	Afternoon Registration	7
8.3	Registration for Games Afternoon.....	7
8.4	Fixtures.....	7
8.5	Off Games Protocol	7
8.5.1	Boys in Years 7,8,9 and 10.....	7
8.5.2	Years 11,12 and 13.....	8
8.6	Exeats.....	8
9	Registration Codes	8
10	Exeat Procedure – Summary.....	9
11	Procedures for lateness or failure to Register	9
12	Sanctions for lateness and failure to Register.....	9
13	Registration procedures in the Prep and Pre-Prep	10
13.1	Student lateness in the Prep and Pre-Prep	10
14	Prep and Pre-Prep School Absence Requests	10
14.1	Medical Appointments.....	11

1 Background

Haberdashers' Boys' School believes that for Students to benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided by the School, they must have high levels of attendance and punctuality. Poor attendance can also have a negative effect on personal and social development amongst Students. The DfE quotes that the students with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. A child missing from school can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation. Consequently, attendance and registration arrangements are hugely important and are regarded as such by Students, Parents and staff.

2 Related Policies

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following other policies

Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy
Missing Child Policy
Safeguarding Policy

3 Terminology

the Head, where not explicitly defined, means the Head of the Boys' School.

the Parents includes one or both parents, a legal guardian, or education guardian.

the School means Haberdashers' Aske's Elstree Schools Limited as Trustee of Haberdashers' Aske's Charity trading as Haberdashers' Boys' School as now or in the future constituted (and any successor).

Student or **Students** means any student or students in the School at any age.

4 Aim

The aim of this Policy is to provide a clear, consistent and cohesive framework which conforms to statutory requirements and promotes high levels of attendance and punctuality of Students at the School, as well as outlining clear procedures for identifying and addressing situations where Students fail to attend regularly, punctually, or go missing. It aims to outline details for:

- Attendance and registration - practicalities
- Authorisation of absence – issuing exeats
- How to raise concerns including identifying and addressing any situation where a Student goes missing from school.

4.1 Statutory Framework

The legal framework governing school attendance is summarised in:

- School attendance: [Working together to improve school attendance \(2022\)](#), published by the Department for Education (DfE)
- Guidance published by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI)
- Hertfordshire Local Education Authority (LEA) herts.gov website.

5 Responsibilities of Parents

Parents with a child of compulsory school age have a legal duty to make sure their child receives efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability (and to any special education needs they may have). Compulsory school age lasts from the term after a child's fifth birthday up to the last Friday in the month of June in the academic year of their sixteenth birthday. Since 2015, all sixteen year-olds have been required to continue education or training until their eighteenth birthday.

Parents are responsible for informing the School on any occasion when their child is unable to attend due to illness, a medical appointment or work experience, providing the reason for non-attendance. In the Senior School this should be done by emailing the Form Tutor and the absence email address absences@habsboys.org.uk as far as possible in advance and by the very latest by 8.35am on the morning of the absence, by which time those that are attending school must be on site. In the Prep School parents are asked to contact the School by 9:00am on every day of absence to confirm why the Student is not coming to school.

In the **Senior School**, parents wishing to take their child out of school for an appointment which is less than half a day should write to or email their child's Form Tutor who will respond to the parent copying in the absences@habsboys.org.uk email address. The Student must then sign out at Aldenham House where a second check will be made. The Student will be recorded as absent from school and must then sign in on their return.

In the **Prep and Pre-Prep School**, parents wishing to take their child out of school for an appointment which is less than half a day should write to or email their child's Form Tutor and cc Prep Deputy Head Pastoral/Head of Pre-Prep who will respond to the parent copying in the Prep Office/Pre-Prep_email address. When collecting the parent must then sign out at Prep/Pre-Prep Office where a second check will be made. The Student will be recorded as absent from school and must then sign in on their return.

For exceptional reasons (such as attending a funeral or wedding, religious observance, elective surgery, or involvement in a regional or national extracurricular competition) which require absence of longer than half a day, the Parent must seek authorisation for the absence from the School by writing or emailing the Head of Section in the Senior School and Head of Prep in the Prep School, in advance of the proposed date(s) of absence. The Head of Section/Head of Prep School will confirm whether the circumstances meet the definition of 'exceptional circumstances' for which leave of absence may be granted by the School. They will email a response and copy in the absences@habsboys.org.uk/Prep or Pre-Prep Office email address.

If a parent wishes to apply for a period of absence which is longer than one day but not for religious observance, they are asked to write to the Head at hm@habsboys.org.uk in the Senior School/Head of Prep School in the Prep School, to seek their permission. Parents are encouraged not to do this as it is very disruptive for their child's education and can cause them distress.

When parents/guardians are to be away from home overnight during term, they are required as part of their contract with the School, to inform the School of the name and contact number of a temporary guardian. This information should be provided to the Form Tutor and should be copied to the relevant Head of Section.

6 Responsibilities of Students

Students have a responsibility to attend school when they are fit and well and to arrive at school in time for registration (morning and afternoon) each day during term time. Please note this is not before 8.00am in the morning. If, for any reason, a Student needs to leave the School site during the school day, he must first seek and receive an Exeat from his Form Tutor or, when he is ill, the School Nurse.

Failure to attend school regularly or punctually or failing to attend registration without good reason or leaving the School without an Exeat or failing to sign in and out of school constitute breaches of the School's Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy and may lead to formal disciplinary action being taken.

7 Responsibilities of the School

Form Tutors (am) and teachers (pm) take and maintain an accurate School Attendance Register of all Students twice each day throughout term time: once at the beginning of the morning session at 8.35am and once in the second (afternoon) session at 1.55pm.

The designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school is Mrs Claire Shooter, Deputy Head (Pastoral).

We aim to build relationships with families, to listen and understand barriers to attendance, and to work with families to remove them. Our target attendance rate is 95% excluding study leave. We will monitor attendance patterns and trends. Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming problematic, ie starting to drop below 90% with no good reason, we will support students and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which will require the School to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners. Where voluntary support has not been effective or has not been engaged with, then the School will work with the local authority to put formal support in place such as a parenting contract or an education supervision order. Children's social care will be involved where there are safeguarding concerns especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).

The School will inform the LEA in the following situations:

- Every time a student's names is to be added to, or deleted from, the school admission register outside of standard transition times (including the statutory reason for deletion). For deletions this must take place before the deletion, and for additions it must be no later than 5 working days after the addition.
- The name and address of any student who fails to attend school regularly or has missed school for 10 days or more without the absence being recorded as authorised.

Local authorities should agree the frequency this must be shared with all schools in their area. This should be no less frequently than once per calendar month.

8 Registration Procedure – the Senior School

The Form Tutors of Students have primary responsibility for registering their tutees in the morning and following up absenteeism and lateness. We recognise that ineffective registration or poorly executed follow-up procedures can increase the risks of truancy and educational under-performance, which can negatively affect personal and social development among Students.

Teachers will take registers every lesson, but the official attendance register will be taken at the start of each session of each school day during the Morning Registration Period (8.35am) and during the Afternoon Registration Period (1.55pm). It is the responsibility of the Form Tutor to alert the Head of House and Head of Section to poor patterns in attendance.

8.1 Morning Registration

- Students should be at school for registration at 8.35am in their Tutor rooms. Students are not allowed to be in school before 8.00am unless they are being supervised by a member of staff
- Form Tutors verify the Students as present or absent by 8.45am using the iSAMS Registration module. Students must not be registered present unless they are sighted by the Tutor during the morning registration
- Only where a Form Tutor has received communication about a Student's absence in advance of the morning registration from their Parent should the absence be noted as authorised. Contact with Parents may be by email, telephone, note, or otherwise but it is important there is a single record of all contact (for example, an Outlook mailbox folder or paper file). This record will be kept by the Absences Team
- Students who have music lessons during registration are registered by their music teacher
- Students arriving late after registration must report to Aldenham House to sign in to register their presence and Form Tutors are expected to follow this up in the next registration period
- If a Student does not appear to be present and yet the School has received no contact from the Parents, the Absence Secretary will visit the Students' class during Period 1. If he is not there, the School will make contact with the parent to determine where the Student is
- Form Tutors will contact parents if a Student has been absent without explanation for two consecutive days (or on the day of the first absence if there are other concerns about the Student) and report any concerns immediately to the relevant Head of Section
- The Absence Team will see N-codes on iSAMS and it is their responsibility to chase up every N-code immediately so that the absence data is maintained
- If Form Tutors are not convinced about an explanation of illness provided to excuse absence they should discuss it with the relevant Head of Section, who may request that Parents provide medical evidence to confirm the illness. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

8.2 Afternoon Registration

- Period 4 teachers open iSAMS which should automatically pick up their P4 group showing the current registration status for each Student. Cover teachers will need to manually select the class they are covering and follow the same procedure
- Any Student who is not present in Period 4 should be left as an N-code. This is then followed up by the Absence Secretary to check where they are.
- Sixth form Students with a private study Period 4 are required to sign in at the library or in Aldenham House. A daily check is run and any Students who do not sign in are left as N-codes for the Form Tutor to follow up
- Students who have music lessons will be registered by their music teachers and given a M code
- Students who are in the Medical Centre will be registered by the Absence Secretary who will give them an H-code.

8.3 Registration for Games Afternoon

- Registration for Games afternoons is completed using SOCS. For each student, the register must be marked either as present or absent. Registration takes place where each activity meets at 13:55. Staff must ensure that registers have been completed no later than 14:10 to allow for cross-checks to be completed. The Sports Administrator will export the participation report from SOCS cross checking any authorised absences and communicating with games staff to ensure any late attendance is noted. The Sports Administrator will then mark students as present on iSams (/) any students taking part in external activities as (V) and students who are unaccounted for will remain N codes. Any students still not accounted for (N) will be emailed to the Absence Registrar who will trigger the 'missing persons' policy and procedures if students are not located by 14:30.

8.4 Fixtures

Students who are attending offsite fixtures during games must register with the member of staff in charge of the activity. They will do this via the teamsheet registers on SOCS. This information is shared with the Sports Administrator who will update iSams with a V code.

8.5 Off Games Protocol

Students who are off games should register and remain with their activity where possible. If students are unable to remain with their activity, they should register with their group before reporting to Medburn reception where they will work under supervision in Joe's Café (Y11-13).

8.5.1 Boys in Years 7,8,9 and 10

Students are expected to remain with the activity if they are off-games to assist staff where possible. In cases where this is not possible, if they are on crutches for instance or there are poor weather conditions then the form tutors are asked to make arrangements with the library staff so that they can be accommodated in the library. Where this happens the member of PE staff in charge for the games afternoon will also need to be informed (see list below) and students must register with the Librarian.

8.5.2 Years 11,12 and 13

Boys are expected to remain with the activity unless they are unable to as noted above. If they are unable to remain with their games group they should register in the off games area (Joe's Café) with the Sports Administrator and complete quiet work here.

8.6 Exeats

Students with Exeats will already have been given approval and are required to sign out at Reception when they leave the school site.

9 Registration Codes

Code	Description
/	Present
L	Late
C	Coaches Late
V	School Trip or Activity (Off-Site)
J	Approved Activity (On-Site)
M	Music/Choir/Ensemble
H	School Health Centre
P	Private Study
R	Religious Observance
I	Illness
!	Covid Related Illness
*	Self Isolating
\$	Shielding
A	Authorised Absence
E	Excluded/Suspended
S	Study Leave
D	University Open Day
N	Not Present
U	Unauthorised Absence
F	Field Day (Off Site)
T	Teaching on Opposite Site
O	Off Games
#	School Closed to Students

10 Exeat Procedure – Summary

Less than a full day	Parent sends an email/letter to the Form Tutor who acknowledges, gives permission and passes the information to absences@habsboys.org.uk .	The Student needs to sign in/out <u>at AH</u> .
1 day	Parent sends an email/letter to the Form Tutor who acknowledges, passes to the Head of Section who gives permission if appropriate. The Form Tutor responds to the parent and passes the information to absences@habsboys.org.uk .	The Student will not be leaving during the day so will not need to thumb out.
More than one day	Parents must send an email/letter to the Head to request permission. If permission is given, the Head's PA will respond to parents and pass the information onto absences@habsboys.org.uk copying in the Head of Section, Head of House and Form Tutor.	
Religious Holidays	Religious holiday requests go straight to the Head of Section who will reply to parents and copy in the Form Tutor. They will also alert absences@habsboys.org.uk .	

When a Student leaves school, he must sign out at the Main Reception in Aldenham House. Students returning from an Exeat should thumb back in at Main Reception.

11 Procedures for lateness or failure to Register

Any Student arriving after registration time must go directly to Aldenham House and sign in. They will be marked as Late.

The Form Tutor will note the lateness and where there is a valid reason to excuse the lateness, the Student is recorded as Present; otherwise, the Student is recorded as Late.

12 Sanctions for lateness and failure to Register

Students are expected to be punctual and any Student who is persistently late can expect to be sanctioned in line with the sanctions stated in the School's Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

Students who fail to sign in will be reprimanded by their Form Tutor and official sanctions may well be issued. Persistent failure to sign in will result in a parental meeting.

13 Registration procedures in the Prep and Pre-Prep

The Form Tutor's takes e-Registration every morning and afternoon between 8:30 - 8:45am and 1.25 - 1:30pm (1pm-1.10pm in the Pre-Prep). At 8.50am and again at 1:40pm (1.15pm in the Pre-Prep), the School Office logs into the registration system to see which form has not registered, or which Student has been marked blank. Parents are asked to contact the School on every day of absence to confirm why the Student is not coming to school, however if there has been no contact by 9am, the Prep Secretary will investigate the absence firstly by checking the late book, the Music School, and the Form Tutor, before telephoning the parent to ask the reason why the Student has not registered or arrived in school.

A Student will only be marked present if they are physically in the form room or have been seen by the Form Tutor.

Any scheduled music lesson during the day will be marked on a separate sheet in the Register, (for fire-drill purposes).

13.1 Student lateness in the Prep and Pre-Prep

It is the Form Tutor's responsibility to ensure Students arrive punctually and to make contact with the parents if a Student is late on more than two occasions each term. Lateness is monitored throughout the term to identify any repeat offenders, and the Form Teacher/Pastoral Deputy Head/Head of Pre-Prep will invite parents into school to discuss any issues that arise. This applies to Students who have a repeating pattern of sick days.

When a Student arrives late at morning registration it is essential for the Student to sign the late book which is located in the School Office. The School Secretary will check this in the morning before altering the register.

14 Prep and Pre-Prep School Absence Requests

There is no right to leave of absence for parental holidays in term time. For absences up to half a day, these can be approved by the Deputy Head Pastoral who oversees attendance records in the Prep. For students in Reception – Year 2, these requests can be made to the Head of Pre-Prep. For all absences of more than half a day, a written request for absence must always be made to the Head of Prep School in the who will determine if the Student should be granted the absence in which case it is marked in the Register as an 'Authorised Absence'. A maximum of 2 days authorised absence may be granted. In exceptional cases, the Head may grant more than 2 days' absence as a 'once in a Prep School lifetime' occasion. This is always recorded on the Student's file.

Students will be granted a leave of absence for religious purposes but must make a request, in writing, to the Head. Parents are requested to provide the school with 5 days' notice for LOA for Religious reasons.

14.1 Medical Appointments

Parents are encouraged to make medical appointments for their child outside of term time or at the end of the school day. In instances where this is not possible, parents should seek to arrange the appointment to allow for a late arrival or early departure to minimise disruption to the student's schoolwork. Absence requests for an appointment should be made via e-mail to the form teacher and Prep/Pre-Prep Office. For absences that require half a day, please also copy in the Deputy Head Pastoral or Head of Pre-Prep, depending in which year group your child is in. For absences over half a day, a request should be made in writing to the Head of the Prep School directly.