



Attendance Policy

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1 Background

Haberdashers' Girls' 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 have a negative effect on personal and social development amongst Students. A child missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect or in itself may indicate that a Student is at risk of significant harm. Consequently, attendance and registration arrangements are hugely important and must be seen to be 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 Headmistress of the Girls' School.

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

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

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: Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (2014), 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

5.1 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. This should be done through Firefly 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.

Parents wishing to take their child out of school for an appointment which is less than half a day should request absence through Firefly. The Student must then sign out at Reception where a second check will be made. We cannot authorise for Students to leave the school site unless accompanied by a named parent or guardian, for example, not in a taxi without an appropriate adult below Year 10, and for Year 10 and above we require written consent that the parent takes responsibility for their child from them leaving school. 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 through Firefly in advance of the proposed date(s) of absence.

In the Senior School, the relevant Head of Section (a 1 day absence request) or the Headmistress (more than a 1 day absence) 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 AbsencesGirls@habselstree.org.uk email address.

In the Junior School, the Head of the Junior School will confirm whether the circumstances meet the definition of 'exceptional circumstances' for which leave of absence may be granted by the School. Absence alerts and absence requests can be made through FireFly or by contacting the school office by phone.

The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the School to accept it. Absence should be authorised if:

- the student is absent with permission from the School as outlined in Section 7 below.
- the student is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause;
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance;
- there is a family bereavement;
- a student is granted study leave;
- a student is engaged in an approved off-site educational activity

- a field trip or educational visit not run by school;
- an approved sporting activity;
- an interview with a prospective employer;
- a visit to a prospective university, college, or another school, subject to the guidelines governing number of permissible absences for such activities (2 days).

Absence should be unauthorised if no explanation that is deemed sufficient by reference to the above list, is forthcoming.

- Parents are encouraged not to apply for a period of absence which is longer than a day unless completely unavoidable as it is very disruptive for their child's education. Extended absences are unlikely to be authorised due to the disruption it can cause to a child's education. The School does not authorise holidays in term time. The school is unlikely to authorise work experience placements in term time.

Parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school or otherwise.

With regard to independent schools, the Local Authority can still issue parents a Fixed Penalty Notice and proceed to prosecute for non-attendance.

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 Year / Head of Sixth Form.

5.2 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, they must first seek permission from their Head of Section, or when they are unwell, the School Nurse. They must not call parents asking to leave the school site during the day without permission from a member of staff as detail above or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Any student who does this would be breaching the school's policy on mobile phones and therefore, may be subject to disciplinary action.

Failure to attend school regularly or punctually or failing to attend registration without good reason or leaving the School without permission 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.

5.3 Responsibilities of the School

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the Attendance Champion. The Senior Leadership Attendance Champion:

- Sets a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishes and maintains effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff and have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.
- Monitors and evaluates attendance records, identifying trends and any subsequent actions required

- Monitors the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes with regard to attendance.
- Ensures all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Liaises with the Safeguarding Governor regarding attendance to ensure appropriate levels of oversight are provided for attendance procedures and data.

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 School will inform the relevant LEA and/or Children's Social Care as appropriate, immediately if:

- A single absence raises child protection concerns (see the Missing Child Policy and Safeguarding Policy)
- A Student has 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence)
- 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). The Admissions Department is responsible for deletions and additions. This must be no later than 5 working days after the addition. The Admission Register itself is managed by the Admissions Department. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the PA to the Deputy Head Pastoral must be notified of both deletions and additions before these actions take place to ensure the relevant safeguarding records can be shared from the previous school or college, or to their ongoing school or college.
- The Education Welfare Officer will be contacted if a Students attendance falls below 85%.
- The name and address of any student of compulsory school age who has been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year.

Children's Services will be contacted if a Students attendance falls below 50%.

The School analyses attendance data to monitor attendance patterns and trends to ensure that its efforts to improve attendance and directed, and appropriate support is provided. A pupil's individual circumstances are always taken into consideration wherever there are attendance and punctuality issues.

In the event of attendance that falls below 90% over the course of a half term, the school should:

- arrange a meeting between the Head of Year in the Senior School or the Phase Leader in the Junior School or a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the parents if there are more significant concerns.
- Offer specific support to parents and individual pupils

In the event of attendance falling below 85% over the course of a half term, the school should:

- Arrange a meeting between the Section Head in the Senior School/ Head of Junior School and the parents
- Offer specific support to parents and individual pupils

In the event of attendance falling below 80% over the course of a half term, the school should:

- Arrange a meeting between the Deputy Head Pastoral in the Senior School/ Head of Junior School and the parents
- Offer specific support to parents and individual pupils

6 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 at the start of Period 4 (1.55pm) in the afternoon. It is the responsibility of the Form Tutor to alert the Head of Year and Head of Section to poor patterns in attendance.

6.1 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 the Attendance Officer 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, , 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 Form Tutor, and then can attend their music lesson.
- Students arriving late after registration must report to Reception 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 Team will visit the Students' class during Period 1. If the Student is not there, the School will make contact with the parent to determine where the Student is. If it is not possible to contact the parents or the parents believe their child is at school, the Missing Child Policy will be followed.
- Form Tutors should contact parents if a Student has been absent for three 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.
- Form Tutors will see N-codes on iSAMS and it is their responsibility to chase up every N-code immediately with the Attendance Officer 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 Year / Head of Sixth Form, 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.

6.2 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 and an email should be sent to AbsencesGirls@habselstree.org.uk. This is then followed up by the Absence Team to check where they are.
- Sixth Form Students with a private study Period 4 are required to sign in at Sixth Form Study Area or in Reception. 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 and sanction where necessary
- Students who have music lessons at the start of Period 4 are registered by their Period 4 teacher, and then can attend their music lesson.
- Students who are in the Health Centre will be registered by the Absence Team but the class teacher should always check that the student is accounted for legitimately by notifying the Absence Alerts team that the student is not in their lesson.

6.3 Procedures for lateness or failure to Register

Any Student arriving after registration time must go directly to Reception 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 'Authorised Late' (C); otherwise, the Student is recorded as Late.

6.4 Sanctions for lateness and failure to Register

Students are expected to be punctual and any Student who is persistently late can expect to receive a sanction in line with 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.

6.5 Fixtures

Students who are attending offsite fixtures must register with the member of staff in charge of the activity, this information is logged on SOCS. If a student is absent then the member of staff in charge of the activity will inform the attendance team who will check the whereabouts of the absent student.

6.6 Off Games Protocol

Students who are listed as 'off games' should register and remain with their activity where possible. If students are unable to remain with their activity, they should register at the Reception and sign-in at the library.

8.5 Trips Protocol

- Before you leave for your Educational Visit you should ensure that the register is correct on EVOLVE

- Upon departure from School or when meeting at a pre-agreed location a register should be taken on EVOLVE, which could be accessed when away from school in the following ways:
 - use of a School 4G-enabled iPad, which can be booked from IT Support in advance
 - use of a personal device
 - use of a school laptop, which may be Wi-Fi connected if still within School grounds or tethered to a mobile device with an internet connection
- Anyone who is not present should be marked as absent on the register
- An email with the names of any absent students should be sent to Absence Alert for chasing up
- During the educational visit regular registers and head counts should be undertaken at the discretion of the Trip Leader.

6.7 Registration Procedures – Junior School

In the Junior School, Class teacher to take and maintain an accurate School Attendance Register of all students twice each day throughout term time (8.35am and 1.25pm) at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions in School.

Teachers should be able to account for the whereabouts of all Students in each of their lessons, and take registers accordingly, but the official 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 (1.25pm for the Junior School). It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher to alert the Phase Leader to patterns of poor attendance or persistent lateness.

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 that this is not before 8.00am in the morning, when Senior School students may enter the school building, and Junior School students will be supervised on the Junior School playground until 8.30am (unless they are registered for Breakfast Club – see Wrap Around Care arrangements in the Junior School Parent Handbook).

7. Summary of Who Will Provide Confirmation of Outcome for Absence Requests in the Girls' School

Absence Requests should all be made through Firefly.

	Senior School	Junior School
Less than a full day	Student's Head of Year	Deputy Head Pastoral
1 day	Head of Section If permission is given, the Head of Year will respond to parents and pass the information onto AbsencesGirls@habselstree.org.uk copying in the Form Tutor.	Deputy Head Pastoral
More than 1 day	The Headmistress. If permission is given, the Headmistress's PA will respond to parents and pass the information onto AbsencesGirls@habselstree.org.uk copying in the Head of Year,, Head of Section and Form Tutor.	Head of Junior School

Religious Holidays	<p>During the academic year several religious festivals fall on weekdays during term time. Parents must request permission for absence using the 'Religious Holidays Absence Request' form. This absence will automatically be approved.</p> <p>Please note that absence requests for more than 1 day, need to be requested in writing to the Headmistress. See 'Responsibilities of Parents' section above.</p> <p>This is monitored by the Headmistress' PA.</p>
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When a Student leaves school, they must sign out at the Reception. Students returning to school should sign back in at Reception.

Registration Codes

From 1 September 2024, the Girls' School will change registration codes to be in line with the Department for Education (DfE). These codes will enable the school to monitor attendance more effectively and identify the reasons for absence more clearly and precisely over time.

Code	Habs Descriptions until July 2024	Description from DfE / will be in place from 1 September 2024
/	Present	Present
L	Late	Late (Authorised)
C	Coaches Late	Other Authorised Absence
V	School Trip or Activity (Off-Site)	School Trip or educational visit
J	Approved Activity (On-Site)	Attending another educational institution or prospective employers e.g. Open Day or interview
M	Music/Choir/Ensemble	Medical/ Dental Appointment
H	School Health Centre	Holiday (Authorised)
G		Holiday (Unauthorised)
P	Private Study	Participating in approved sporting activity
R	Religious Observance	Religious Observance
I	Illness	Illness
A	Authorised Absence	
E	Excluded/Suspended	Excluded/ Suspended
S	Study Leave	Study Leave including Private Study
D	University Open Day	Dual registered at another school
N	Not Present	Reason for absence not yet provided.
U	Unauthorised Absence	Unauthorised lateness
F	Field Day (Off Site)	
T	Teaching on Opposite Site	
O	Off Games	Unauthorised Absence
Y		Unable to attend school due to exceptional circumstances
B		On-site approved activity e.g. ensembles, rehearsals
#	Planned Whole School Closure	Planned Whole School Closure