



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

.....  
**Signed – Head Teacher**

Jonathan Kemp  
**Print Name**

**Date:** September 2021

**Review:** July 2022  
Addendum added September 2021

**DofE: Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year: Updated: 26/07/21**

The Department of Education has amended regulations to enable schools, in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, to continue to record where a pupil does not attend in circumstances relating to COVID-19.

***Attendance expectations***

Attendance is mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education

***Not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19***

This category must be used to record sessions that take place in the 2021 to 2022 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from Public Health England (PHE), or its successor UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19

This category must only be used to record where a pupil is not attending for the reasons set out above. It should not be used to record any other type of non-attendance or absence - for example, where a parent or pupil is anxious about attending school because of COVID-19.

The schools COVID-19 operational guidance sets out when pupils should self-isolate and when they ought to be tested in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

***Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19' could apply***

In line with current legislation, and guidance from PHE (and its successor the UKHSA) and DHSC, examples are as follows.

### **Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they have symptoms or confirmed COVID-19**

Pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test, should self-isolate and get a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well, they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I (illness). Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.

If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with public health guidance. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

### **Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19**

Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to self-isolate. They should instead get a PCR test, and should only self-isolate if they test positive. If they do test positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

### **Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine**

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, the school should use code X in the register.

### **Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable when shielding is advised**

Clinically extremely vulnerable people are no longer advised to shield. All clinically extremely vulnerable pupils should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.

If shielding is advised nationally or in a local area again, by DHSC, PHE or UKHSA, then pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable may be advised not to attend school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from DHSC, PHE or UKHSA should be recorded as code X.

### **Pupils who are self-isolating but who have not had a PCR test**

In line with public health advice, pupils with symptoms must self-isolate and schools should strongly encourage pupils to take a PCR test. Where the pupil is unable to take a PCR test, the school should record the pupil as code X in the register.

Schools should follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Schools can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes, in line with the [school attendance: guidance for schools](#).

### ***Remote education***

If a pupil is not attending school because their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19, we expect schools to offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with, this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

## **1. MISSION STATEMENT**

- 1.1** Batchwood School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise their true potential. **Our strategic objectives aim for an average rate of 95%.**
- 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 Batchwood School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents/carers and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.
- 1.6** Sally Smiles is the school's Attendance Officer. She will work with parents to keep open channels of communication with the aim of improving attendance across the school.

## **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 on the first morning of any absence, and every day thereafter*
- *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 9am and at 12:30pm. Morning registers close at 09:20. Afternoon registers close at 1pm. Students should be in their tutor/teaching areas before these times and seated. If a student arrives after the registers close they 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 the Attendance Lead, Sally Smiles or Designated Safeguarding Lead, Jo Murphy.

### 5. AUTHORISED / UNATHORISED 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:

Genuine sickness  
 Medical/dental appointments  
 Days of religious observance  
 Exceptional family circumstances, i.e 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 Batchwood School will emphasise to parents/carers that all medical/dental appointments should be made outside school hours where possible.

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

Batchwood operates a First Day Response system. Any student who is registered as absent without an explanation will receive a phone call to their parents/carers before 10.00am to report that their child is not at school. This will be followed up by a text message 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. If no contact is received by 10:30, we will try to contact any additional emergency contacts for the child, before reporting them as missing to the appropriate agencies.

## 8. TRUANCY

Batchwood 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 Pastoral Team and ultimately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Pastoral team and form tutor 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 15 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
- PM – Check the registers for absences

### **Weekly:**

- Produce attendance reports for the Headteacher
- Percentage Attendance spreadsheet
- Assist Headteacher 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.
- Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices. These will be shared with the 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 Attendance Officer/AIO and if deemed necessary the Headteacher.
- Good attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded through weekly house points for a full week's 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 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 tutor groups 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/pastoral team. Attendance is reported in every student's report.
- Prizes for excellent attendance will be rewarded at our annual award ceremony.

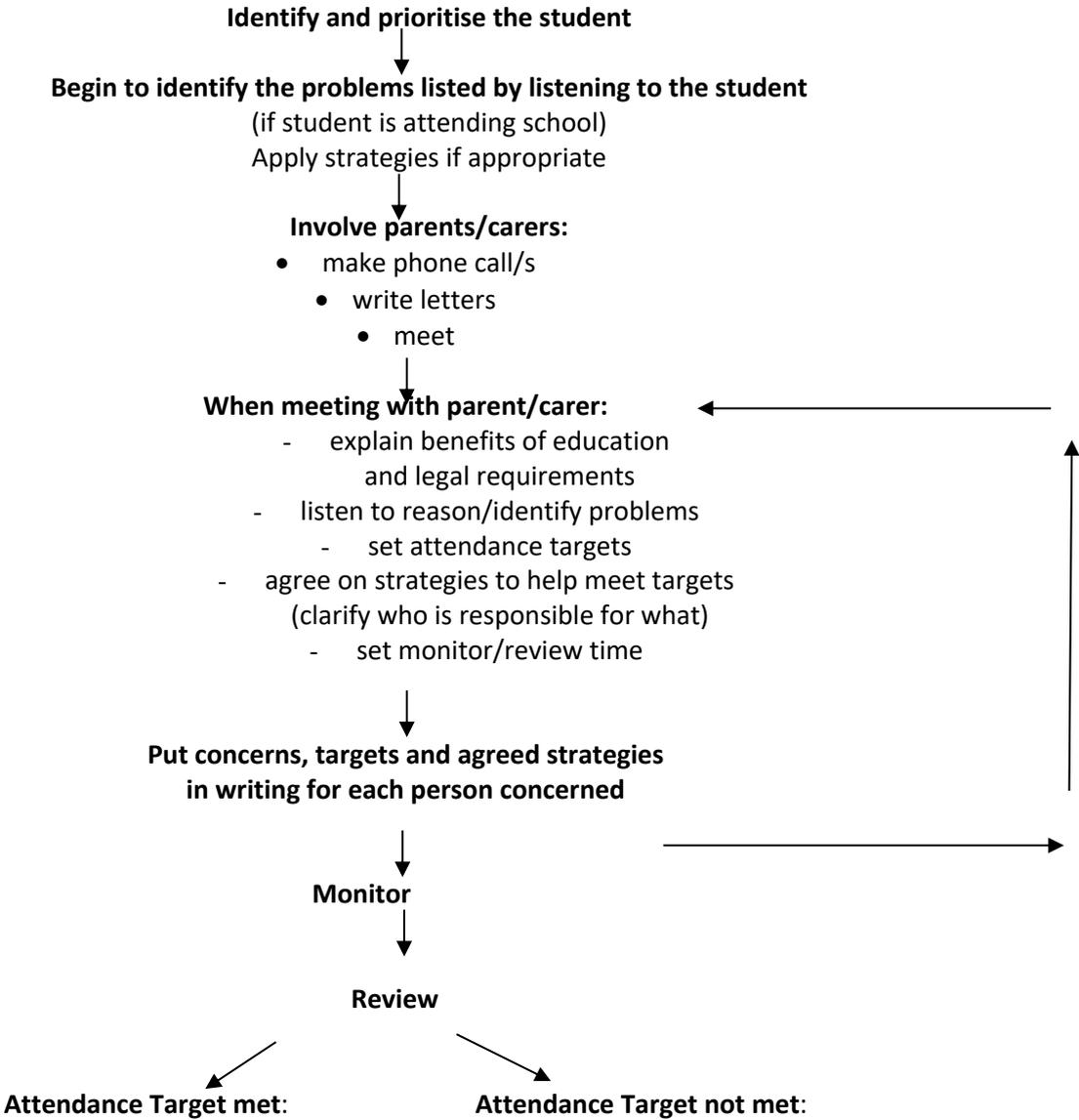
## **12. IN SCHOOL ACTION**

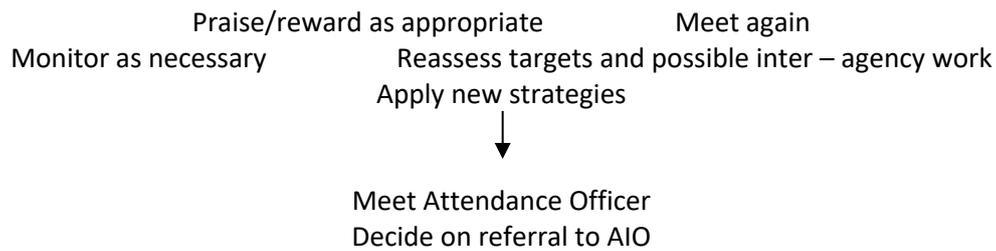
### **How can it be used?**

- The flow chart below suggests a process of in-school action that may lead to an improvement in attendance.
- We recommend that intervention begins with the tutor/attendance officer, and progresses to involve Senior Staff (such as Deputy Headteacher) if appropriate.
- All relevant letters to and from parents/carers etc. should be stored in the Year file for easy reference.
- 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.

**Batchwood 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).

### Batchwood School Strategies

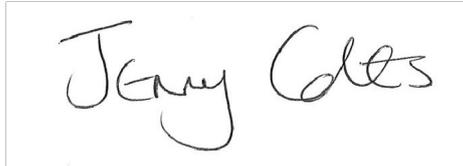
Strategy	Comments on strategy	Dates (from/to)
Provision		
Targeted first day response		
Assistance to catch up with work		
Link person/mentor		
Modification of curriculum/timetable		
Positive reporting		
Safe haven in school		
Staged reintegration		
Change of tutor group		
Buddy (peer)		
Assign special 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

## Integrated Services for Learning

### LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICY ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

<b>PUBLICATION SCHEDULE NUMBER:</b>	<b>CSF0136</b>
<b>PUBLICATION DATE:</b> September 2017	<b>ISSUE NO:</b> 10
<b>AUTHORISING OFFICER:</b>	<b>JENNY COLES</b>
<b>AUTHORISING OFFICER'S SIGNATURE:</b>	
<b>AUTHOR OF PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>Mary Bainton</b>
<b>POST:</b> <b>ATTENDANCE TEAM:</b>	<b>COUNTY LEAD FOR</b>
<b>REVIEW DATE:</b>	<b>November 2020</b>
<b>TARGET AUDIENCE:</b>	<b>ALL HERTFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS</b>
<b>PUBLISHED BY</b> <b>Learning</b>	<b>Children's Services, Integrated Services for</b>



## **CONTENTS**

	<b><u>Section</u></b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Statement of Intent</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Responsibilities – Parents and Carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Responsibilities – Schools</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Responsibilities – ISL Attendance Teams</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The Use of Legal Action</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Penalty Notices for Parents of Truants</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>School Attendance Orders</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Admission and Attendance Registers</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Authorising Absence</b>	<b>10</b>

<b>Administrative Codes</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Approved Off-Site Educational Activity</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Flexi-schooling</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Part-time time-tables</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Family Holidays during Term Time</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Policy for <b>Local Authority Attendance</b> Officers working with children whose absence has been authorised</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings</b>	<b>2</b>

## ***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 Children's Services, Integrated Services for Learning and all schools to work closely together in partnership with parents in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

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

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

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

Parents 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 (if the school has an 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' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify their children's school if they are absent. This should be done 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 children return to school
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- should not book holidays during term time

## **4. Responsibilities - Schools**

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

Schools are required to call attendance registers –

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 pupils do not leave school between registrations. They should ensure that pupils can be accounted for in an emergency and that a pupil removed from the school at lunchtime will not go unnoticed.

Registers must record whether each pupil is present; attending an approved educational activity; absent; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. In the case of a pupil 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 publicised to parents.

When calling the register the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil'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 pupil'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.

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.

Schools should:-

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

## ***Punctuality***

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

School policies, brochures and website should clearly state the time at which each school session begins and finishes, including the time at which registers open and close. Schools should not keep a register open for the whole session.

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

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

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

When a pupil 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.

## ***School Attendance Policy***

Schools are not required to have an attendance policy but are encouraged to do so.

Good practice suggests that the following should be taken into consideration when writing a school attendance policy:-

- 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
- 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 encourage whole school attendance
- promote the setting of targets for individual pupils, form groups etc.
- establish systems for rewarding good/improved attendance
- be sensitive to individual pupils' needs
- be alert to critical times ( e.g. secondary transfer )
- establish procedures for re-integrating long-term absentees
- 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 (newsletters, website etc)
- be reviewed at regular intervals
- make clear to parents that it is the school - not the parent - which authorises an absence.
- make clear to parents 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. Actively promote the link between attendance and achievement
- 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
- notify the Local Authority of any pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly, have irregular attendance, or have 10 or more consecutive school days absence without the school's permission. Schools are also under a safeguarding duty, under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to investigate any unexplained absences

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>)

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

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

Each school in Hertfordshire has a link Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) who can work with the school.

The Attendance Teams can offer the following services:-

## **ATTENDANCE DUTY SYSTEM**

A dedicated telephone line through which schools can contact an LAAO between the hours of 9.00 am to 1.30 pm, Monday to Friday.

Types of enquiries may include –

- school issues e.g. register coding, holiday absence etc.
- enquiries relating to a pupil
- 10 day absence returns
- request for Early Intervention letters
- FPN enquiries
- Removal from Roll enquiries
- requests for referrals

## **VISITS TO SCHOOLS**

All schools have a named link LAAO who can liaise with the school and undertake whole school work for their allocated schools.

### ***Whole School Attendance Overview***

The Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) can work with relevant member(s) of staff to ensure your school is Ofsted ready. Any issues arising from this visit can inform targeted whole school work for the academic year, focussing on supporting your school to reduce PA and the absence of vulnerable groups.

Schools with high levels of PA may be subject to ‘no notice’ Ofsted inspections. Visit(s) can be used to analyse the school’s data, discuss any school specific PA issues, and agree a strategy and action plans to address PA.

Data analysis is an important part of this process and LAAOs will support schools to analyse their attendance data and draw up plans to address any specific issues. Analysis may include:

- persistent absence
- absence profile
- use of register codes
- comparison of form groups in individual years
- percentage of absence due to holidays
- attendance of vulnerable groups
- types of absence e.g. a few pupils with significant absence or many pupils with occasional absence
- lateness after registers close
- year by year percentage attendance
- attendance trends – is attendance increasing or decreasing?

Other than engaging in casework there are a variety of supportive ways in which LAAOs can work with schools to increase attendance levels.

### ***i) School Attendance Policies***

Schools are not required to have an attendance policy, but are encouraged to do so to support consistent practice and effective communication of expectations around attendance.

### ***ii) Parents’ Evenings***

LAAOs can play a key role in promoting school attendance at parents’ evenings and new parent induction meetings.

### ***iii) Attendance Surgeries***

LAAOs can support schools by attending attendance surgeries, to meet with a number of pupils and parents where attendance or persistent absence has been identified as a concern and early intervention deemed an appropriate action to undertake.

#### **iv) INSET**

LAAOs may offer INSET/staff training. This may cover such issues as school attendance, the role of the LAAO, school-age employment and persistent absence.

#### **v) Governors Meetings**

LAAOs may attend governors meetings to explain various aspects of the work of the attendance team – case work, legal work, FPNs etc.

### **Casework**

Once a case has been accepted, the LAAO will undertake direct work with pupils and their parents. This may include:

- arranging meetings between the school, parents and pupils
- making home visits to assess the situation and determine what action needs to be taken
- offering specific support to parents and individual pupils, either at school or elsewhere
- facilitating meetings
- enabling the pupil and parents to access appropriate support from other services and agencies

Local Authority Attendance Officers will usually work with children whose absences have not been authorised. However, LAAOs may work with children whose absences have been authorised, such as persistent absentee (PA) pupils (see appendix 1).

### **6. The Use of Legal Action**

If a pupil, who is registered at a school, fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Local Authority Attendance Officer and the school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action. A complaint may be laid against the parents in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the pupil under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the pupil'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 Local Authority. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' might include the death of a close relative, certain medically recognised conditions, awaiting SEN placement, specific child protection concerns, change of provision. Legal proceedings can be considered at any stage if no progress has been made and no exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist.

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

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

The Central Attendance & Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority will give approval before legal proceedings are commenced.

The Attendance Teams 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 pupils in Years 10 or 11.

Before an application is made for an Education Supervision Order:

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

## **7. Education Related Penalty Notices for Parents of Truants**

Subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added two 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 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

Further information on penalty notices is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml> or from the local Attendance Team Manager.

## 8. School Attendance Orders

If a parent fails to register a child of compulsory school age at a school (and he/she 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. This requires the parent to register their child at a school named by the Local Authority.

## 9. Admission & Attendance Registers

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016.

It is important that the school's admission register is accurate and kept up to date. Schools should regularly encourage parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur, through existing communication channels such as regular emails and newsletters. This will assist both the school and local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

Where a parent notifies a school that a pupil will live at another address, all schools are required to record in the admission register:

- a) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- b) the new address; and
- c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, schools must record in the admission register:

- a) the name of the new school; and
- b) the date when the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

All schools are required to notify the local authority **within five days** via school admissions - <http://www.intra.thegrid.org.uk/admissions/seam.shtml> when a pupil's name is added to the admissions register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school.

All schools are required to notify the Local Authority of any pupil 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 and independent schools.

For further guidance see - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/csf/admissions.shtml> Responsibilities of the LAAO – Attendance Registers

## ***Inspection of registers***

Registers should be available for inspection during school hours by a Local Authority Attendance Officer when requested.

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

- notify the Headteacher of the concern and request that the matter is addressed
- if no appropriate action is taken by the school, and the LAAO 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 Access and Inclusion

## ***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.

## ***Removal from Roll***

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in **Regulation 8** of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This responsibility applies to all Maintained Schools, Academies, Free Schools, Studio Schools, University Technical Colleges, Education Support Centres and Independent Schools. Full guidance on Removal from Roll is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

**If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare please contact the local Attendance Team immediately.**

**If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or radicalisation please contact the local Attendance Team immediately.**

If a school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure should establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Confirmation should then be sought from the receiving school. When this information has been obtained, the school should complete a Removal from Roll form and return it to the local Attendance Team office. Whenever a pupil 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 pupil has "disappeared" the matter should be drawn without delay to the attention of the Local Attendance Team.

Further guidance and a referral form is available at -  
<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

## **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 and the parent informed.

Schools should communicate to parents their policies with regard to the notification and categorisation of absence. Some parents, 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 pupil's absence is a cause for concern to retain the notes until there is no longer a concern.

Absence should be authorised if:

- the pupil 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 pupil 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 pupil's parent belongs
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil 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 pupil at a school nearer to his/her home
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision
- there is a close family bereavement
- a Year 11 pupil is granted study leave. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise
- leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application. (Parents 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 pupil 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

Before granting a licence the local authority must be satisfied that the child's education will not suffer. A school letter is requested as part of the licence application as confirmation of this. If a school believes a child's education will suffer as a result of taking part in a performance they should provide reasons to the local authority in writing. The information must be specific to the child (saying for example that it is against school policy is not sufficient). If the school does not provide such information the local authority will issue the licence. The absence should be recorded as code C

Further guidance is available at -

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

- Absence should be unauthorised if no explanation is forthcoming from the parents 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 pupil's home is not within walking distance; or a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil 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.
- Pupil not on admission register (Code Z) enables schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.
- Planned whole or 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 Pupils (Code #) can also be used to record staggered starts or induction days. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school year.

## 12. Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

Pupils 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 pupil should be recorded as approved educational activity if he/she 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 pupil 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 should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. By using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.

- Dual Registered – at another educational establishment (Code D)

Note: This code is used to indicate that the pupil 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 pupils are attending an ESC, hospital or special school on a temporary basis or for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children where they 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 pupil is expected to attend. Schools must ensure that they follow up all absence in a timely manner.

## ***Consortia Schools***

Pupils 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 pupils” 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 pupils” 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 pupils physically present on-site.

## **13. Flexi-schooling**

Head teachers can agree to flexi-schooling arrangements where the parents 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 very carefully before agreeing to them and are advised to draw up a written

agreement with the parent. Where agreement has been reached, pupils should be marked authorised absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education. (Code C).

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

All pupils 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 pupil's needs. A part time timetable must be time limited and must not be treated as a long term solution and can only be made with parental agreement. The school should mark the sessions were the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C).

Guidance on part-time timetables is available at -  
<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

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

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil 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 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 <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

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 (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016 is available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk>

Further details information and advice on all aspects of school attendance in Hertfordshire is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

## Appendix 1

### **HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

#### ***Policy for Local Authority Attendance Officers working with children whose absence has been authorised***

- if the LAAO becomes concerned (through checking the attendance register) that a pupil 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 pupil's attendance the school should share this concern with the parents
- if concerns about the pupil's attendance remain, the LAAO will consider asking the school to make a referral to the attendance team
- if a pupil is identified as being a persistent absentee (PA). Persistent absence is when a pupil enrolment's overall absence equates to 10 per cent or more of their possible sessions.

(Note: if a pupil'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).

## **Appendix 2**

### ***ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS***

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
/	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 pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to all pupils (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

GDPR stipulates that Attendance data is personal/ sensitive data. Our school provides Data Subjects (individuals to whom "personal data" relate) with a right to data held about themselves, including those obtained by means of this report. Requests for Data Subject Access should be made to our data protection officer Katie Harris (gdprkharris@gmail.com )or the Head Teacher Mr Kemp (head@batchwood.herts.sch.uk)