



Matrix
Academy Trust
EDUCATION WITHOUT EXCEPTION

Attendance Policy

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Last review date:		January 2023	
Next Review date:		January 2024	
Statutory Policy:		Yes	
Date	Version	Reason for change	Source
30.01.23	V2	Reviewed	Trust

To be read in alongside with our Child Safeguarding Policy and the attendance leaflet for parents/carers/carers.

1. Principles and Ethos

- 1.1 Children cannot learn as effectively if they do not attend school. Attendance at school is a prerequisite to learning and to pupils achieving their full potential.
- 1.2 Excellent attendance is a learned behaviour. Therefore, the Matrix Academy Trust places equal importance on high attendance and excellent punctuality to all our pupils, including those who are not of statutory school age (i.e. children who must get an education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16).
- 1.3 Matrix Academy Trust believes that excellent attendance and punctuality in the early years of school develops and establishes attitudes towards school attendance which impacts on future school attendance and ultimately academic success and social and emotional well-being. Similarly, excellent attendance and punctuality post 16 establishes and develops attitudes to towards attendance in the workplace and thus lifelong achievements.
- 1.4 Schools within the Matrix Academy Trust aims for pupils' attendance to be in line or above national averages.

Excellent = 97% and above (no more than 6 days/12 sessions absent in any one year)

Good = 95% and above (no more than 10/20 sessions days absent in any one year)

Persistent Absence = 90% and below (19 days/38 sessions or more absent in any one year)

Severely Absent = 50% and below (97 days/195 session or more absent in any one year)

NB: *There are 390 possible attendance sessions/195 days (5 of which are INSET days) in one academic year. Each day being divided into 2 sessions.*

- 1.5 Parents/carers are individuals classed as having parenting responsibility as described in Parental rights and responsibilities: Who has parental responsibility - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- 1.6 Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to make sure that their child receives an education at school or by education otherwise than at school.
- 1.7 Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.
- 1.8 Therefore, each child enrolled at our schools is expected to attend **every day and on time**, so that they can achieve their full potential. Schools will manage attendance and punctuality across all year groups according to this policy and statutory guidance.
- 1.9 This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. Department for Education – 'Working together to improve school attendance' Sept 2022

- 1.10 Both parents/carers, with parental responsibility, are equally liable for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and on time, regardless of who the child resides with or who is the main carer. Therefore, they may both be contacted when deemed necessary in managing attendance and punctuality. Similarly, where it is necessary to enforce statutory action (such as the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices) both parents/carers will be liable.
- 1.11 It is acknowledged however, that parents/carers of children who are not of statutory school age cannot be subject to legal processes if their child has poor school attendance.
- 1.12 Where there are concerns about a child's attendance, it is our aim to work with our pupils and their families in a supportive manner to improve attendance by removing any barriers. Our schools recognise the importance of building strong relationships with our pupils and their families.
- 1.13 Where a pupil has a medical condition (physical or emotional), a disability, a special educational need or indeed any other factor which may present a barrier to attendance we uphold our expectation of excellent attendance. We endeavour to work with these pupils and their families, taking into account their individual needs, in order to make reasonable and supportive adjustments to facilitate excellent school attendance.

2. AIMS

- 2.1 To develop attitudes and behaviours that enable pupils to take an active and responsible role in the adult world.
- 2.2 To recognise the importance of attendance to the overall achievement of pupils in school.
- 2.3 To promote a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality with pupils and parents/carers/carers, and to reward good attendance.
- 2.4 To monitor and organise procedures to encourage good attendance.
- 2.5 To create a climate which gives attendance a high profile and ensures that absence for any reason is kept to a minimum.
- 2.6 To ensure that non-attendance and poor punctuality are effectively monitored and followed up.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of all staff, parents/carers and pupils to ensure good attendance and punctuality at school.
- 3.2 Each school has a named senior leader responsible for the strategic lead of attendance and will work closely with the Headteacher

3.3 Pupils should:

- Be waiting outside their form room for the start of morning registration (as published on the school website and in appendix C)
- Arrive on time for the start of your afternoon registration period (see appendix C)
- Sign in at the House Office if they arrive after morning registration has ended (the end of the form period)

- Note that if they arrive after the morning registration period has closed, they will be coded as U (late after registration has closed, which is an unauthorised absence - pupils are on site, but this is legally recorded as an absence).
- Present reasons for absence to their Form Tutor / House PA on their return to school.
- Arrive on **time for all lessons**.
- If available, pupils to record current attendance in planners.

3.4 **Parents/Carers should:**

- Be aware of the morning and afternoon registration periods for their school (as published on the school website and in appendix C)
- Contact the school on the first day of absence, by telephone before the start of the morning registration period (published on the school website), giving reasons for absence, followed by a medical evidence, if applicable, confirming reasons and dates of absence.
- Complete an 'Absence from School' request form for any known absence 8 weeks prior to a known absence.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term time and especially when school tests or examinations are taking place.
- Phone if their child arrives after the morning registration period has closed.
- Make medical appointments before or after the school day where possible.
- Note that they risk being prosecuted by the Local Authority if they fail to ensure their child attends school regularly.

3.5 **Teachers/Form Tutors will:**

- Monitor attendance and punctuality and inform Head of House / Assistant Head of House of any concerns.
- Be vigilant and inform the Head of House / Assistant Head of House if any pupil is giving cause for concern or if there are patterns of authorised or unauthorised absence.
- Inform pupils of weekly attendance and punctuality and ensure this is written into pupil planners.
- Ensure that all registers are up-to-date, accurate and completed on time, in accordance with school procedures and statutory requirements.
- Set a detention for those pupils who arrive to form after the start of the morning registration without a validated reason and have not gone through the late gate.

3.6 **Head of House/Assistant Head of House will:**

- Monitor registers on a regular basis to check for trends in absence and punctuality.
- Liaise with Leadership; Attendance Officer/Education Welfare Officer and other agencies.
- Ensure that all staff are following procedures on completing registers and refer any concerns/problems to the Head of House or Leadership.
- Check with leadership if pupil absences can be authorised.
- Generate data that will produce 100% Attendance Certificates for pupils.
- Distribute individual attendance summaries to pupils in their House when required.
- Host School Attendance Review Meetings with the Attendance Officer.
- Monitor late pupils/vulnerable groups/pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent (attendance rate under 92%)
- Monitor persistently absent pupils (attendance rate under 90%)
- Inform the Local Authority if any pupil fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 4 school days or more.
- Organise which pupils receive 'keeping in touch' checks from the Attendance Officer/Education Welfare Officer.
- Refer to "Keeping children safe in education (2022) Statutory guidance for schools and

colleges' Part One: 'Information for all school and college staff'.

3.7 Attendance Officer/Education Welfare Officer will:

- Promote positive attitudes by pupils and families towards education
- Engage with and supporting pupils and families in overcoming barriers to attendance/punctuality, using innovative strategies.
- Visit and work with families in order to pursue concerns about attendance and other welfare issues. During such visits, formulating strategies, as appropriate, to the family.
- Facilitate effective partnerships between pupils, parents/carers families, the school and external agencies.
- Liaise between student's home and school involving other support agencies as appropriate, including social services, education, psychologists, medical and counselling services.
- Provide pupils, parents/carers and schools with an effective advice and support service to develop best practice.
- Advise school staff and parents/carers on the implications of attendance legislation
- Develop and review Attendance Action Plans/Parenting Contracts to support the improvement of pupil attendance/punctuality
- Support schools in innovative strategies of rewards, incentives and competitions to encourage good attendance

3.8 Administrators/Head of House PAs will:

- Provide a first day phone call to absent pupils in line with good safeguarding practice
- Take telephone messages when pupils are absent from school and inform their Head of House and Assistant Head of House.
- Encode current school information system (e.g. SIMS) to explain absences.
- Provide Heads of House / Assistant Heads of House with a weekly update of all form groups' attendance and punctuality for monitoring.
- Provide 100% attendance data for Heads of House and other data as required.
- Provide weekly accumulative attendance/punctuality data.

3.9 Leadership will:

- Ensure that parents/carers are informed about the importance of high levels of attendance and the procedures and criteria for authorising absence.
- Consider applications for absence from school and communicate with parents/carers if the absence is unauthorised.
- Collate attendance data at the end of each term and the end of the academic year, or as required, and set annual attendance targets.
- Develop and update strategies to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality.
- Deploy resources (such as pupil premium) appropriately to promote excellent attendance
- Maintain and regularly update attendance leaflet displayed on the school's website for all pupils, parents/carers to see. If parents/carers cannot access this online, they can collect a hard copy from the school's reception.
- Liaise with the Attendance Officer to develop initiatives and strategies to improve/maintain attendance.

- Monitor and analyse attendance, providing whole school data for internal and external use.
- Inform the Governing Body about rates of attendance, making them aware of the strategies used to maintain and improve attendance and punctuality.
- Chair meetings with Leadership, House Personal Assistants, Assistant Heads of House, Heads of House and/or the Attendance Officer for pupils with attendance and punctuality concerns.
- Include an Attendance Summary in pupils' Termly Report to parents/carers
- Attend attendance meetings with external agencies
- Inform the Local Authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register and those pupils who may be deemed missing in education (in line with guidance for children missing from education in 'Keeping children safe in education (2022) Statutory guidance for schools and colleges')
- Arrange the 100% attendance assembly for each academic year.
- Ensure the consistent implementation of this policy and that it does not discriminate on any grounds
- Handle any complaints regarding this policy in line with the school's complaint procedures

3.10 CEO will:

- Provide strategic leadership across the Trust on the national attendance agenda and leading on the development of, and compliance with, the Trust's Strategic Plan for Attendance
- Lead on a strategy that supports pupils and families to ensure at least good attendance and tackle barriers to attending across the Trust, its schools, specific cohorts of pupils and individual pupils.
- Ensure that each school in the Trust consistently implements current statutory guidance, legislation, Matrix Academy Trust Policy, procedures and ethos
- Hold schools within the Trust to account for compliance with attendance policies, processes and strategies.
- Be accountable for attendance data, developing and implementing robust data collection and analysis to identify attendance patterns and trends, providing recommendations on action.
- Design and implement systems for monitoring compliance across the Trust
- Report to the Trust Board and other relevant groups within the Trust

3.11 Trustees will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promoting it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing, and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Receive regular reports on an attendance from the CEO

4. Persistent and Severe Absence

- 4.1 If a pupil's attendance **falls below 90%**, they become categorised by the DFE as a 'persistently absent' pupil and will be monitored closely by the school/attendance officer.
- 4.2 Similarly if a pupil's attendance **falls below 50%**, they be categorized by the DFE as a 'severely absent' pupil and will also be monitored closely by the school/attendance Officer.
- 4.3 Our schools will work with the local authority and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.
- 4.4 Schools within the Matrix Academy Trust will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 4 school days or more.
- 4.5 There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and become persistently absent (e.g. Looked after children, pupils with chronic illnesses etc). The school will ensure it provides support to these pupils and work closely with all relevant external authorities where necessary.
- 4.6 The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence to attend school. These may include:
- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
 - Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
 - Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
 - Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
 - Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
 - Assessing whether an EHCP plan may be appropriate.
 - Considering whether an Early Help Assessment may be appropriate
 - Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.
- 4.7 Where a pupil at risk of persistent or severe absence is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.
- 4.8 The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe or persistent absence following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

5. Requests for Leave of Absence

- 5.1 Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be made at **least 8 weeks in advance** of the event and in writing using the Leave of Absence Request Form given in appendix B.
- 5.2 Retrospective approval for absence cannot be granted.
- 5.3 Under exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may consult with the CEO for approval.
- 5.4 Parents/carers do not have the right of appeal if a request for a leave of absence is declined, the head teacher's decision is final.
- 5.5 Leave of absence will NOT be granted for pupils whose attendance falls into the persistent absent category (less than 90%) or where attendance/punctuality are a concern.
- 5.6 Leave of absence will NOT be granted during periods of public examinations or internal school assessments.
- 5.7 Leave of absence will NOT be granted for holidays during term time.
- 5.8 Where leave of absence is NOT authorised and parents/carers decide to take pupils out of school despite the school's decision, absence will be recorded as unauthorised and subject to a fixed penalty notices (fine).
- 5.9 If the schools grants a leave of absence request and subsequently obtains evidence that indicates an application was falsified, the school reserves the right to amend the child's attendance records to record the absence as unauthorised and apply for the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.
- 5.10 Where a pupil fails to return to school after an agreed period of leave of absence, absence will be recorded as unauthorised, a fixed penalty notice (fine) requested and they may be reported to the Local Authority as 'A Child Missing in Education' and potentially lose their place at the school.

6. Holidays

- 6.1 The Headteacher **will not be able to grant** any leave of absence during term time.
- 6.2 This applies to **all** pupils who are required to be in statutory education.
- 6.3 If a parent/carer decides to take a holiday in term time and it has not been authorised, they will receive a **Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)** and have to **pay £60 for each child removed from school**. This will need to be **paid within 21 days** and, if not paid within this time, the charge **will rise to £120 per parent per child and must be paid within 28 days** to avoid potential prosecution.

7. Managing Absence

- 7.1 A range of strategies will be used to support pupils in achieving excellent attendance Our schools will:
- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.

- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Consider if an Early Help Assessment is appropriate
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures and develop an Attendance Support Plan
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents/carers.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance clinics.

7.2 Pupils with attendance below 90%, will be required to provide the school with medical evidence for any further absence to be authorized

7.3 Schools are under no obligation to provide work for pupils who are absent from school, unless pupils are taking part in sporting/arts/theatre events as part of professional organisation and permission has been received from the local authority.

7.4 Remote learning for pupils unable to attend school will only be provided in exceptional circumstances (e.g. long-term illness supported by medical evidence, unexpected school closure).

8. SEND and Health-Related Absences

8.1 We recognise that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

8.2 In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with disabilities to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHCP plans that have been implemented.

8.3 The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

8.4 Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance.

8.5 Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

8.6 If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the local authority if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than **15** school days.
- Provide the local authority with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

8.7 The school will implement an Attendance Support Plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

9. Legal Intervention

9.1 The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect or parents/carers fail to engage in the support being offered, the Attendance Officer will consider statutory action.

9.2 This may involve requesting the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notice (fine); referring to the LA for prosecution as a final resort and referring to children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

9.3 Further information on legal intervention can be found in 'Working together to improve school attendance' DFE Sept 2022

[Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/704447/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

10. Children Missing in Education

Where a pupil has been absent from school for a period of **20** consecutive school days without authorisation or has not returned within **10** days after an authorised absence a pupil can be removed from the admissions register when the school and LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupils.

11. Reduced Timetables

11. 1 Placing a pupil on a reduced timetable may be used as a strategy to support a pupil who is finding attending school a challenge.

11.2 The use of part time or reduced timetables are used as a short term (ideally for no more than **6 weeks**) measure to ensure the successful return to full time education.

11.3 The decision to place a pupil on a reduced timetable must be approved by the Headteacher.

11.4 Reduced timetables will be reviewed every two weeks, with the aim of increasing the timetable at each review point.

11.5 These pupils must also be reported to the local authority.

12. Elective Home Education

12.1 Parents/carers are within their rights to make requests for home educate their children however, it is the ethos of the Matrix Academy Trust that children are best placed to learn in school and therefore requests for flexi-schooling arrangements will not be granted and home education discouraged.

12.2 Any such requests should be placed **in writing** to the Headteacher.

12.3 The school will liaise with the Elective Home Education team within the local authority prior to removing any pupil from the school roll

13 Other documents and legislation which relate to this policy include:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance – Department for Education 2022
- Equality Act 2010
- UN Convention on Rights of The Child 1992
- Education Act 1996
- Keeping Children Safe in Education - Department for Education 2022
- Children Missing in Education - Department for Education 2016
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs - Department for Education 2013
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) 2012 & 2013
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- Well-Being Policy
- Special Needs/Inclusion Policy/Core Offer
- Supporting Pupils with Medical/Additional Health Needs Policy
- Pupil Premium Strategy
- Complaints Policy

Appendix A:

How Long Should You Keep Your Child Off School

Taken from [How long should you keep your child off school - checklist poster \(text version\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-long-should-you-keep-your-child-off-school-checklist-poster-text-version)

Promotional material

How long should you keep your child off school - checklist poster (text version)

Updated 27 April 2022

Applies to England

Yes	Until
Chickenpox	at least 5 days from the onset of the rash and until all blisters have crusted over
Diarrhoea and Vomiting	48 hours after their last episode
Cold and flu-like illness (including COVID-19)	they no longer have a high temperature and feel well enough to attend. Follow the national guidance if they've tested positive for COVID-19
Impetigo	their sores have crusted and healed, or 48 hours after they started antibiotics
Measles	4 days after the rash first appeared
Mumps	5 days after the swelling started
Scabies	they've had their first treatment
Scarlet fever	24 hours after they started taking antibiotics
Whooping cough	48 hours after they started taking antibiotics

No	But make sure you let their school or nursery know about
Hand, foot and mouth	Glandular fever
Head lice	Tonsillitis
Threadworms	Slapped cheek

Further advice and guidance on [managing cases of infectious diseases in all education and childcare settings](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/managing-cases-of-infectious-diseases-in-all-education-and-childcare-settings) is available.

PARENTAL REQUEST FOR PUPIL ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Parents should be aware that any absence from school, for whatever reason, would have a detrimental effect on the child's learning and progress.

Only in **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES** should parents apply for their child's release from school for **ANY REASON**.

Should this be necessary, please complete the form below and return it to your child's school address

*No later than **8 weeks** prior to the essential absence*

Pupil's Name:	Form:
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Absence requested from (start date):	To (end date):
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Reason for this request:

I request permission for my child to be absent from school on the above dates. I understand that this absence will disrupt my child's learning and I will ensure that my child completes all work that they miss as a result of their absence. I understand that if my child misses an external examination through absence I will be required to pay for the examination fees.

I am aware that my child will be removed from school roll if he/she is out of school for more than 20 consecutive days, and details of any holiday taken will be passed on to the Education Welfare Service.

Signed (<i>Parent/Guardian</i>):	Date:
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For school use only					
Date received:					
Attendance percentage to date:	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Previous requests:	Year 7 YES NO	Year 8 YES NO	Year 9 YES NO	Year 10 YES NO	Year 11 YES NO
Request approved/denied:		APPROVED		DENIED	
Signed:		Date parents informed of decision:			

COPY TO HEAD OF HOUSE / SIXTH FORM

LW/JM/PARENTALREQUESTFORABSENCE 19/01/19

Appendix C: School Procedures. Etone College

Morning Registration

The school gates open to welcome pupils at 8am and close at 8.45am. Pupils arriving after the gates have closed go through reception and sign in at the relevant house office.

Morning registration is open from 8.45. Pupils arriving after registration closes (after 9.15), will be marked as late after register closes (U code). This is an unauthorised absence and negatively impacts a pupils attendance percentage.

Afternoon Registration

Afternoon registration is open from 12.45 pm until the end of lunch (P4) .

Lesson Registration

At Etone College, attendance registers are also taken for individual lessons.

If a pupil is missing from a lesson, the teacher will inform the Head of House and House PA's to locate the student. If a student is internally truanting then a sanction is put in place and communicated with parents.

Leaving The Premises During the School Day

All pupils sign out at House Office with evidence.

Notifying the school of your child's absence

Parents/carers must notify school on the first day the child is unable to attend school by 8.30 am.

Parents must give detailed reasons for absence. For example, 'child has a throat infection/been sick etc' rather than just 'unwell/poorly'.

Name of person absence should be reported to: House office on the absence line.

Contact Details: 02476 757300

Where a child (including those of non-statutory school age) is absent from school and parents/carers have not contacted the school to inform them of the reason for absence the school will record an unauthorised absence and follow safeguarding procedures to ascertain the reason for absence and whereabouts of the pupil.

This may involve the school making contact with parents and other named contacts on record. If by the third day of absence no contact has been made the school will carry out a home visit and report the absence as a safeguarding concern. Where there are pre-existing concerns about the safety or well-being of a pupil the school may carry out a home visit on the first day of absence. Where there are serious concerns about the safety and well-being of a pupil whose reason for absence is not known the school may contact the police, local authority or social services.