

Hitchin Girls' School



Attendance Policy

This is a Statutory document required of all schools.

Date of issue: November 2025
Trust Board approval: November 2025
Review date: November 2026

Mission Statement/Vision

At Hitchin Girls' School, it is our aim that all members of the school community, trustees, staff, parents/carers and students are committed to and encourage good levels of attendance and punctuality. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if students attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances. Students cannot learn if they are absent from school and there is a correlation between attendance and achievement. Poor attendance will have a negative impact on the progress and achievement of a student. Poor attendance will affect the personal wellbeing and social development of a student. If they are not attending they cannot benefit from their education and will not achieve. They are neither learning nor actively contributing to school life. If they are absent they may not be in a safe environment; or they may be practising unhealthy lifestyles. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our young people take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of all students.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they might have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school.

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance. The statutory guidance includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions.

The responsibility for good attendance and punctuality is shared between school, parent/carers and students. As a school we will aim to:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students
- Promote good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Communicate in a timely manner with parents/carers about attendance and punctuality concerns
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Understand the barriers to attendance and work with stakeholders and support agencies to address these
- Ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Ensure staff model the expectations for attendance and punctuality
- Build strong relationships with families to make sure students have the support in place to attend school
- Promote children’s welfare and safeguarding

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

It is a rule of this school that students must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the Headteacher, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The trustee board

The trustee board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, students and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for students who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all students, but adapts processes and support to students' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual students or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting students needs
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at Hitchin Girls' School.
- Making sure all staff, students and families recognise that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Setting the culture and ethos of the school which encourages positive relationships, so that students value their time in school and actively strive to attend.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees.
- Supporting staff by providing the tools needed for monitoring the attendance of individual students.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Assistant Headteacher with oversight of attendance to be able to do so.
- Working with the SENCO to support parents/carers of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with SEND and where students with SEND face in-school barriers
- Ensuring the SENCO communicates with the local authority when a student with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the student's needs.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to students and parents through all available channels.
- Ensuring appropriate training is provided to ensure attendance is recorded accurately and systems are fit for purpose.

3.3 The designated Assistant Headteacher responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader with oversight of attendance is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis in order to identify any patterns of persistent absence so that intervention can be appropriately targeted.
- Regularly monitoring, analysing and evaluating progress in attendance.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.

- Liaising with students, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families.
- Working with attendance improvement officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue notices to improve or fixed-penalty notices
- Rewarding good or improving attendance.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Caroline Hone.

3.4 The attendance administrator

The school attendance administrator is responsible for:

- Monitoring daily attendance and ensuring that registers are kept accurately, as well as following up absence as required by law.
- Ensuring a daily attendance return is submitted to the Department for Education, in line with legal expectations placed on all schools.
- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it accurately on the school attendance systems.
- First day contact calls when parents/carers have not reported reasons for absence.
- Updating registers with correct attendance codes (Appendix 1) for students who are absent.
- Daily welfare calls when vulnerable students are not attending school.
- Speaking to parents/carers about attendance concerns and escalating to Head of Year and Pastoral as appropriate.
- Issuing notice to improve notifications to parents/carers.
- Preparing fixed penalty notice paperwork.

3.5 Teaching staff and cover staff

Teachers and cover staff are responsible for:

- Recording attendance within the first 5 minutes of a lesson or registration on Go4Schools (Y7-11) or SIMS (Y12-13).
- Raising on call within the first 10 minutes of a lesson starting if a student is missing from a lesson.

- Recording minutes late to registration or lessons on Go4schools so that punctuality can be monitored and concerns followed up.
- Setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- Monitoring attendance in their own lessons and raising concerns if they arise.
- Building respectful relationships with all staff, students, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Make sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school to encourage attendance
- Providing work if a student is unable to attend for medical reasons.
- Welcoming students back to school if they have been absent for a period of time and supporting them to bridge gaps in learning as appropriate.
- Having supportive conversations with tutees and parents/carers regarding attendance as directed by the Head of Year .

3.6 Parents/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/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly, punctually and being in lessons when in school.
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return. Absence@hgs.herts.sch.uk should be used to report absence. Parents/carers will be expected to provide an adequate reason for the absence.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, medical appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Not book holidays during term time.
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or Local Authority if concerns about attendance have been raised.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the attendance administrator, form tutor, pastoral or Head of Year

3.7 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session, on time
- Register with lessons before attending pastoral or other support areas in school
- Communicate if there are barriers to attendance

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

Hitchin Girls' School will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the day during registration and within the first 5 minutes of each lesson. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include a flag to indicate the reason for the change and the staff initials.

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school is open for students to arrive from 8.15am and the school day ends at 3.30pm.

Students must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.05 am. Students arriving after this time will receive a U code.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school attendance administrator or emailing absence@hgs.herts.sch.uk. We will telephone or email parents/carers if we have not been contacted by 9am, however it is parent/carers responsibility to contact the school.

The school will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days either consecutively or cumulatively, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Authorisation should be requested by emailing absence@hgs.herts.sch.uk.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

- The number of minutes late will be recorded and if there is not a legitimate reason for the lateness, students will be expected to ‘payback’ every 60 minutes of missed school time with a 60 minute after school detention. Number of minutes late will be recorded for late to registration or late to lessons respectively. Where a student receives a detention, this will be categorised as C2LR (registration) or C2LL (lessons).

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the student’s parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student’s emergency contacts, the school will email and may complete a home visit if there is a safeguarding concern
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the student was absent
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an attendance improvement officer
- If the student has been absent for 10 days in a calendar month, the Hertfordshire 10 day absence form will be completed and submitted as The School Attendance (student registration) (England) Regulations 2024 Section 13 requires schools to inform the Local Authority of any students absent from school and where absences amount to more than 10 or more days, either consecutively or irregularly and have been unauthorised. If there is a safeguarding concern, the designated safeguarding lead will be contacted to discuss next steps (Section 175 of the Education Act, 2002). At this point the student will be considered to be “absent from education”.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the student needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with warning letters, notice to improve and fixed penalty notices will be used

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/carers will have daily access to their child's attendance through Go4schools. Attendance will also be available in the termly reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

The Headteacher will allow students to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad - in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA).
- Attending an interview - for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the student normally lives with.
- Study leave - for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the student normally lives with. This does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable - where the student is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the student normally lives with and school agree the student should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the student will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as something which could not have been avoided through reasonable measures.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. You may be requested to provide further details about the absence so that decisions can be made.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a student to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the Local Authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the student not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (this list is not exhaustive)

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session.
- Shopping trips.
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- Their own or family birthdays.
- Holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Day trips.
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis. 'Notice to Improve letters' will be issued prior to penalty notices, unless this has been accumulated due to unauthorised holiday.

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), Local Authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued. Hertfordshire guidance is found here: [HCC Code of Conduct - Penalty Notices for School](#).

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks) The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers. The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student
- Whether further support, a 'notice to improve' or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the student must not be present in a public place on that day).

A penalty notice can be issued to each parent believed to be liable for the offence or offences.

The education related provisions for the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 apply to all the parents who fall within the definition set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996. This defines 'parent' as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parents has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is a parent in education law.

The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued within a three-year period it will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. The parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. The matter may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court under section 444 Education Act 1996. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent/carer may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent/carer is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out by Hertfordshire County Council. Guidance is found in the [HCC Code of Conduct - Penalty Notices for School](#).

They will include:

- Details of the student's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of up to 6 weeks for the improvement period. The maximum period is 30 school days.
- Attendance will be monitored daily during the notice to improve period
 - Parents/carers will be provided with clear contact details for the staff member(s) within the school that they should contact to access the support that remains available during the Notice to Improve validity period.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period. If no improvement is seen, a penalty notice can be issued without waiting the full 30 days

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Hitchin Girls' School will promote a culture of positive attendance by reinforcing the importance of this regularly to all stakeholders. This will form part of the weekly form tutor conversations, celebrating good attendance and encouraging those where there is

a concern. The importance of attendance will be highlighted at transition, during year group information evenings, through communication with parents/carers and during expectations assemblies. Good attendance will also be a criteria for students to attend the end of year trips - warning letters will be issued regularly if attendance is below the expected level.

7. Supporting students who are absent or returning to school

7.1 students absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If a student is absent due to complex barriers, including EBSNA (emotional based school non-attendance), the following actions may take place as appropriate:

- Parent/carer and student will be invited to attend a meeting and home visit will be offered if they are unable to attend school
- Anxiety/barrier mapping will take place to establish the barriers to attendance
- Parent/carer will be supported to access the Hertfordshire EBSA toolkit
- Referrals to appropriate support agencies will be completed
- Students will have access to google classroom
- Daily welfare checks will take place when a student is not in school
- Part-time timetables might be used temporarily to support reintegration back into school. These will be reviewed fortnightly and reported to Hertfordshire County council
- Referral to the attendance improvement officer will take place if the in-school support does not successfully remove the barriers to attendance

7.2 students absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

If a student is too unwell for school, but is able to access learning still, the following procedures will take place:

- Medical evidence will be requested
- ESMA (Education Support for Medical Absence) referral will be completed
- Depending on the outcome of this referral, support might vary from online ESMA lessons, ESMA in person lessons
- Students who are attending ESMA will have a key worker who will be responsible for checking in with them and ESMA will have a key contact member of staff
- If a student is unwell due to their mental health, pastoral support will be implemented and appropriate referrals will be completed

Where a student has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the student's needs, the school will inform the local authority. Under the DfE's statutory guidance, the school is required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all students who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

7.3 Students returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

If a student has had an extended absence, the following support will be provided:

- Opportunity to meet with head of year, form tutor or pastoral staff to discuss support that is required
- Communication with all staff through the inclusion bulletin to ensure everyone is aware of the circumstances for the student
- Time offered to catch up on missed work and support from the learning support team as required to fill gaps
- Regular conversations with form tutor to check-in
- Offer of pastoral support
- Potential of temporary part-time timetable to support reintegration

7.4 Students requiring a temporary part-time timetable

The school recognises that there may be circumstances when a student requires a temporary part-time timetable to support their needs. In order to facilitate this, Hertfordshire guidance will be followed and the following will be implemented:

- Part-time timetable will only be implemented following a meeting with parent/carer and student
- Parent/carer must sign an agreement before this is implemented, a reintegration plan must be completed and a risk assessment will take place
- It will be made clear that this is a temporary arrangement which will be monitored and reviewed every two weeks
- If the part-time timetable is not having a positive impact on the student and they are unable to increase attendance, further actions will take place as this needs to remain a temporary arrangement
- Part-time timetable arrangements will be reported to Hertfordshire county council via the Solero system

Follow guidance on HCC Grid when considering a part-time timetable -
<https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/part-time-timetables>

8. Attendance monitoring

Hitchin Girls' School will monitor attendance daily to follow up student absence, but will also monitor attendance patterns regularly to tackle areas of emerging need. When attendance concerns are emerging, the Assistant Headteacher with oversight of attendance will work with appropriate teams both in school and externally to build support for the student. Punctuality is monitored weekly and late minutes are accumulated to be 'paid back' with detention for every 60 minutes missed.

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) monthly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student, year group and cohort level.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely, in line with the 2024 'Working together to improve attendance in schools' guidance.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the trustee board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of monthly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual students, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis

- Provide targeted support to the students it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance data to form tutors and heads of year to facilitate discussions with students and families, and to the trustee board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and student premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and **severe absence** is where a student misses 50% or more of school. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any student's education and we need the full support and cooperation of parents to resolve this. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these students. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

- Issue 'notice to improve' letters and/or attendance contracts so that parents are kept informed about attendance concerns so they have the opportunity to address this
- Seek advice from the Hertfordshire attendance team as required and complete referrals for support if attendance does not improve

9. Local Authority Attendance Support Specialists

Local Authority Attendance Support Specialists work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance. Parents/Carers are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parent/Carers should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken which may be in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Annex B for the Hertfordshire Code of Conduct) or other legal options available to the Local Authority such as prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a annually by the Assistant Headteacher with oversight of attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Deletion from Roll

It is crucial that parents/carers keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the student and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under student Regulations 2006, all schools are legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the student being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that student, and in any event no later than the time at which the student's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a student's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the student has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

12. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND policy

- Supporting students with medical conditions policy
- ESMA Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	student arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	student is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school

Y1	Transport not available	student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	student is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In police detention ● Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or ● Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session

Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance.
From 19th August 2024

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf