

Home Visit and long-term absence policy

Introduction

Syon Manor College is committed to promoting excellent attendance, safeguarding the welfare of all students and providing appropriate support where barriers to education arise.

The college recognises that long-term absence can be an indicator of unmet need, safeguarding concerns, emotional wellbeing difficulties, family circumstances or other barriers impacting a student's ability to engage in education. Home visits form part of the college's supportive and proactive approach to student welfare, attendance and reintegration.

This policy outlines the circumstances in which home visits may take place, the professional expectations of staff conducting visits, and the procedures followed before, during and after a visit.

This policy should be read alongside the colleges:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Communication with parents/carers Policy

The college's approach is underpinned by current safeguarding guidance and statutory expectations regarding attendance, safeguarding and partnership working with families and local authorities.

Purpose of Home Visits

The purpose of a home visit is to:

- Promote student welfare, safeguarding and wellbeing
- Support positive engagement with education
- Identify and understand barriers to attendance
- Work collaboratively with parents, carers and students
- Provide support and guidance to families
- Establish whether additional intervention or external agency support may be required

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- Support reintegration into college following prolonged absence
- Ensure students are safe and receiving appropriate support
- Fulfil the college's safeguarding and attendance responsibilities

Home visits are intended to be supportive and solution focused. They are not designed to be punitive or intrusive.

Threshold for Home Visits

A home visit may be considered where:

- A student has been absent from college for three consecutive days and the 'Eyes on After 3' procedure outlined below has been triggered.
- A student has been absent from college for an extended or prolonged period without sufficient engagement or explanation.
- Repeated attempts to contact the student or family have been unsuccessful.
- There are concerns regarding a student's welfare, wellbeing or safety.
- A student is identified as vulnerable or at risk.
- Reintegration support is required following prolonged absence.
- The college believes a home visit is necessary as part of its safeguarding or attendance responsibilities.

The college reserves the right to arrange a home visit sooner where safeguarding concerns or significant welfare concerns are identified. The 'Eyes on After 3' procedure provides a minimum attendance and welfare response and does not prevent the college from taking earlier action where circumstances indicate this is necessary.

Eyes on After 3

The 'Eyes on After 3' procedure is an enhanced attendance and safeguarding process designed to ensure that the college establishes the welfare of a student who has been absent for three consecutive days.

Given the additional needs and potential vulnerabilities of students attending Syon Manor College, the college recognises that attendance concerns may require a more proactive response. The purpose of this process is to establish 'eyes on' the student, wherever possible, and to identify any barriers, welfare concerns or safeguarding issues that may be contributing to the absence.

The following procedure will apply:

Day 1–2 – Initial absence procedures

- The college's usual first-day absence and attendance procedures will be followed.
- The reason for absence should be recorded accurately.

- Appropriate contact with parents/carers should be maintained in accordance with the Attendance Policy.
- Any safeguarding or welfare concerns identified during this period must be escalated immediately and should not be deferred until Day 3.

Day 3 – Video call / ‘Eyes on’ check

Where a student has been absent for three consecutive days, the college will make a video call to the home to establish contact and, where possible, see the student.

The purpose of the video call is to:

- Establish that the student is safe and well.
- Confirm the reason for the continued absence.
- Establish whether there are any barriers preventing attendance.
- Identify whether additional support is required.
- Where possible, obtain ‘eyes on’ confirmation of the student.

Where the video call is answered and the student is seen on the call, a home visit will not normally be required on Day 4.

Where:

- the video call is not answered;
- contact cannot be established;
- the parent/carers is unable to facilitate the call; or
- the student cannot be seen,

a home visit will be conducted on Day 4.

Day 4 – Home visit

Where the student could not be seen or contact could not be established on Day 3, a home visit will be undertaken on Day 4.

The purpose of the visit is to establish the student’s welfare; understand the circumstances surrounding their absence and identify any support or intervention that may be required.

The outcome of the visit must be recorded in accordance with the college’s recording and documentation procedures.

Day 7 – Further ‘Eyes on’ home visit

If the student has not returned to college by the seventh consecutive day of absence, a further home visit will be conducted.

This applies regardless of whether the student was seen during the Day 3 video call or during a previous home visit.

The visit should:

- Establish the student's current welfare and circumstances.
- Confirm the ongoing reason for absence.
- Identify any changes or emerging concerns.
- Consider barriers to returning to college.
- Identify whether additional safeguarding, attendance or multi-agency intervention is required.
- Agree appropriate next steps with the student, parent/carer and relevant college staff.

Day 10 – Local Authority notification

If the student remains absent and has not returned to college by the tenth consecutive day of absence, the relevant Local Authority will be informed in accordance with the college's attendance and safeguarding responsibilities.

The college will provide relevant information regarding:

- The student's attendance and absence history.
- Attempts to contact the student and family.
- The outcome of any video call.
- The outcome of any home visits.
- Any identified welfare or safeguarding concerns.
- Support or interventions already offered.
- Any further action considered necessary.

Following notification to the Local Authority, the 'Eyes on After 3' process will begin again, with the college continuing to monitor the student's welfare and attendance and repeating the appropriate actions from Day 3 onwards until the student returns to college or alternative arrangements are formally agreed.

Safeguarding override

The 'Eyes on After 3' process is a minimum attendance and welfare procedure and does not replace professional safeguarding judgement.

Where there are immediate or significant concerns about a student's safety or welfare, staff must not wait until Day 3, Day 7 or Day 10 before acting. The college's safeguarding procedures must be followed and concerns escalated immediately where appropriate.

Consideration should be given to students with additional vulnerabilities, complex needs, communication difficulties, medical needs, known safeguarding concerns or a history of persistent or prolonged absence. In such circumstances, the DSL or another appropriate member of the safeguarding team may determine that contact, a welfare check, a home visit or referral to an external agency is required at an earlier stage.

Local Authority and Multi-Agency Information Sharing

Where a student's absence becomes long-term or persistent, the college will notify the relevant Local Authority in line with statutory attendance and safeguarding expectations.

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Following a home visit, the college may share relevant information with the Local Authority, safeguarding services or appropriate external agencies where:

- There are safeguarding concerns
- A student is at risk of becoming missing from education
- There are ongoing concerns regarding attendance
- Additional support or intervention is required

Information sharing will be conducted in accordance with safeguarding legislation, data protection requirements and the college's safeguarding procedures.

Arranging a Home Visit

Where possible, home visits will be arranged in advance with the parent, carer or student.

The college will explain:

- The reason for the visit
- Who will attend
- The intended purpose of the discussion
- Any support that may be offered

However, in exceptional safeguarding circumstances, the college reserves the right to conduct an unannounced welfare visit where it is considered necessary and proportionate.

Home visits will normally be conducted by appropriate members of staff, which may include:

- A member of the safeguarding team
- Pastoral support workers
- Senior leaders
- A member of staff from the students Mentor Group

Where appropriate, visits may be conducted jointly with external professionals or agencies.

Staff Conduct During Home Visits

All staff conducting home visits are expected to always maintain professional standards.

Staff must:

- Treat students and families with dignity, respect and sensitivity
- Remain professional, non-judgemental and supportive
- Clearly identify themselves as college staff
- Conduct visits in line with safeguarding and professional boundaries

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- Maintain confidentiality in accordance with college procedures
- Record factual and accurate information following the visit
- Avoid entering a property if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- Immediately report any safeguarding concerns in line with college safeguarding procedures

Where possible, home visits must be conducted by at least two members of staff.

Staff must not:

- Place themselves in unsafe situations
- Make promises regarding outcomes that cannot be guaranteed
- Share confidential information inappropriately
- Engage in confrontational or argumentative behaviour
- Conduct visits outside of professional expectations

The safety and wellbeing of both students and staff remains paramount throughout the process.

Safeguarding Considerations

Home visits form part of the college's safeguarding responsibilities and may provide important information regarding a student's wellbeing, safety and engagement.

Any safeguarding concerns identified during or following a visit must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and recorded in line with safeguarding procedures. If the DSL is not available, concerns must be reported to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) or another member of the safeguarding team.

Where concerns indicate a student may be at risk of harm, appropriate referrals will be made to safeguarding agencies and/or the Local Authority.

Recording and Documentation

A written record of all home visits will be completed and securely stored.

Records should include:

- Date and time of visit
- Staff members present
- Who was spoken to
- Reason for the visit
- Key information discussed
- Any support offered or agreed actions

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- Safeguarding or welfare concerns identified
- Recommendations and next steps

All records will be handled in accordance with GDPR and the college's confidentiality procedures.

Reintegration Support

Where appropriate, the college will work collaboratively with students and families to support reintegration into education.

Support may include:

- Attendance support plans
- Timetabled reintegration programmes
- Wellbeing support
- Safeguarding intervention
- Referrals to external agencies
- Academic support arrangements
- Pastoral mentoring

The college recognises that successful reintegration is most effective when achieved through positive partnership working between students, families and college staff.

Equality and Inclusivity

Syon Manor College is committed to ensuring this policy is applied fairly, consistently and without discrimination.

The college will consider individual student needs, vulnerabilities, disabilities, medical conditions, cultural factors and safeguarding considerations when arranging and conducting home visits.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly by senior leaders to ensure compliance with current safeguarding, attendance and statutory guidance.

The college reserves the right to amend this policy in response to legislative updates, safeguarding guidance or operational requirements.