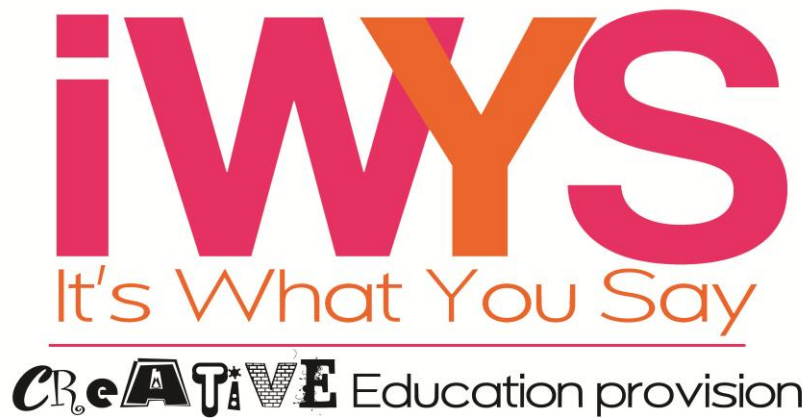




# IWYS

## ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

#### **Our attendance principle**

For every absence, ask: “Why is this student not attending, and how can we help and what do we need to do about it?”

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## 1. Policy Statement

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to students' education, safeguarding, wellbeing, development and future opportunities.

Alternative Provision students may face barriers such as previous school difficulties, anxiety, SEND, medical or family needs, transport problems, bullying, safeguarding concerns or disengagement.

IWYS will respond supportively, consistently and proportionately, working with students, families, commissioning schools, local authorities and professionals to remove attendance barriers.

#### **Statutory guidance**

This policy is designed to reflect the principles and expectations of the DfE statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance and relevant requirements applying to Alternative Provision.

## **2. Aims**

- promote high levels of attendance and punctuality;
- establish a positive culture around attendance;
- identify attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity;
- ensure attendance is accurately recorded;
- safeguard students who are absent from education;
- identify and remove barriers to attendance;
- work positively with parents/carers and commissioning schools;
- provide appropriate support for students experiencing attendance difficulties;
- monitor persistent and severe absence;
- ensure appropriate action is taken when attendance does not improve;
- ensure attendance information is shared appropriately with relevant agencies; and
- support students to achieve their educational potential.

## **3. Legal and Statutory Framework**

This policy should be read alongside relevant legislation and DfE guidance, including:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance;
- Children Missing Education;
- Alternative Provision statutory guidance;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024; and
- relevant safeguarding and education legislation.

## **4. Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Headteacher / Head of Provision**

- promote a whole-setting culture of good attendance;
- ensure this policy is implemented effectively;
- ensure attendance is monitored regularly;
- identify patterns and trends;
- ensure concerns are acted upon promptly;
- liaise with commissioning schools and local authorities;
- ensure safeguarding concerns linked to absence are addressed;
- ensure appropriate attendance interventions are implemented; and

- ensure staff understand their attendance responsibilities.

## 4.2 Attendance Lead

- maintain accurate attendance records;
- monitor attendance daily;
- follow up unexplained absence;
- contact parents/carers where appropriate;
- identify emerging attendance concerns;
- monitor persistent and severe absence;
- maintain attendance intervention records;
- communicate with commissioning schools; and
- contribute to attendance meetings and reviews.

## 4.3 All Staff

- take attendance accurately and promptly;
- record attendance using the appropriate codes;
- report concerns about a student's attendance;
- follow safeguarding procedures when a student is unexpectedly absent;
- encourage positive attendance and punctuality; and
- maintain a supportive and non-judgemental approach.

## 5. Student Responsibilities

- attend IWYS on every day they are expected to attend;
- arrive on time;
- attend all timetabled sessions;
- engage positively with their education;
- inform staff if they are experiencing difficulties that may affect attendance; and
- follow the setting's behaviour and safeguarding procedures.

Students facing attendance barriers should be supported, not simply penalised.

## 6. Parent/Carer Responsibilities

- ensure their child attends regularly;
- ensure their child arrives on time;
- notify IWYS as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend;
- provide a reason for absence;
- provide supporting information where reasonably requested;
- work with IWYS and the commissioning school to address attendance concerns;
- attend attendance meetings where requested; and
- inform IWYS about circumstances that may affect their child's attendance.
- Parents/carers should contact IWYS before the student's expected start time wherever possible.

## 7. Recording Attendance

IWYS will keep an accurate register for every session each student is expected to attend.

Attendance records will distinguish between:

- present;
- authorised absence;
- unauthorised absence;
- approved educational activity;
- late arrival; and
- other appropriate statutory attendance codes.

Attendance must be recorded promptly and accurately in line with current DfE requirements.

## 8. Morning Registration

The morning register will be taken at the start of the student's first scheduled session.

1. Attendance is taken promptly.
2. Unexplained absence is identified.
3. Appropriate follow-up action is initiated.
4. Safeguarding concerns are escalated.

If an expected student does not arrive, IWYS will follow its first-day response procedure.

## 9. Afternoon / Session Registration

For students attending multiple daily sessions, attendance will be recorded for each one.

Students must follow agreed procedures when leaving during the day. Leaving without permission will trigger safeguarding action.

## 10. Punctuality

Lateness reduces learning time, disrupts lessons and can make settling difficult.

Where lateness becomes a pattern, IWYS may:

- discuss the concern with the student;
- contact parents/carers;
- discuss transport or other practical barriers;
- agree an attendance support plan; and/or
- involve the commissioning school or relevant professionals.

## 11. First-Day Response to Absence

For unexpected absence without explanation, IWYS will make reasonable enquiries to establish the reason.

- contact the parent/carer;
  - contact the commissioning school;
  - check whether there is a known medical or other reason;
  - check safeguarding information; and
  - escalate concerns where appropriate.
- Unexplained absence must be recorded, reviewed and followed up.

## 12. Safeguarding and Attendance

Unexplained, prolonged or repeated absence may signal harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, mental or emotional difficulties, family problems or missing education.

Where absence raises safeguarding concerns, staff will follow the IWYS safeguarding and child protection procedures.

## 13. Attendance and Alternative Provision

Because Alternative Provision students may have complex educational, social, emotional or safeguarding needs, attendance support will be personalised.

Where appropriate, IWYS will work with:

- the commissioning school;
- parents/carers;
- the student;
- the local authority;
- social care;
- SEND professionals;
- health professionals;
- education welfare/attendance services; and
- other relevant agencies.

The aim is to understand non-attendance and provide practical support.

## 14. Persistent Absence

Persistent absence means missing at least 10% of possible sessions; severe absence means missing at least 50%.

IWYS will not wait until a student reaches these thresholds before acting.

Early indicators may include:

- increasing numbers of absences;
- repeated Monday/Friday absence;
- regular lateness;
- frequent unexplained absence;
- patterns associated with particular lessons;
- repeated medical absence;
- reluctance to attend; and
- repeated requests to leave early.

## 15. Attendance Support Process

### Stage 1 – Early Support

- monitor attendance;
- discuss concerns with the student;
- contact parents/carers;
- identify barriers; and
- provide appropriate support.

## Stage 2 – Attendance Support Plan

Where concerns continue, IWYS may develop an individual attendance support plan including:

- attendance targets;
- identified barriers;
- agreed support;
- named staff member;
- review dates;
- student and parent/carer involvement; and
- commissioning school involvement.

## Stage 3 – Formal Attendance Review

- a formal attendance meeting may be arranged;
- the commissioning school will be informed;
- additional agencies may be involved; and
- further intervention may be considered.

## Stage 4 – Escalation

Persistent non-attendance may be referred to the commissioning school, local authority attendance service or another appropriate agency. Statutory bodies will apply any legal intervention in line with current guidance and individual circumstances.

# 16. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

IWYS will seek to understand the reasons behind poor attendance rather than assuming that absence is simply a choice.

| Barrier                             | Possible support                             |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Anxiety                             | Trusted adult; gradual reintegration         |
| SEND                                | Reasonable adjustments; personalised support |
| Bullying                            | Safeguarding / anti-bullying intervention    |
| Transport                           | Liaison with commissioning school/family     |
| Medical needs                       | Appropriate medical support                  |
| Family difficulties                 | Early Help / multi-agency support            |
| Disengagement                       | Student voice; personalised curriculum       |
| Safeguarding concerns               | Safeguarding referral/action                 |
| Poor punctuality                    | Travel/routine support                       |
| Previous negative school experience | Relationship-based approach                  |

## 17. Medical Absence

Students unable to attend for genuine medical reasons will receive appropriate support. IWYS may seek further information if absence becomes frequent or concerning.

IWYS will consider:

- the student's medical needs;
- medical advice where available;
- reasonable adjustments;
- safeguarding considerations; and
- whether education can be appropriately supported in another way.

IWYS will not automatically treat genuine medical absence as unauthorised.

## 18. Mental Health and Attendance

IWYS recognises that emotional wellbeing and mental health difficulties can affect attendance.

- listen to the student;
- identify barriers;
- work with parents/carers;
- consider reasonable adjustments;
- liaise with relevant professionals where appropriate; and
- agree a suitable support plan.

Students will not be blamed or shamed for attendance difficulties.

## 19. SEND and Attendance

Where a student has SEND, IWYS will consider whether their needs are contributing to attendance difficulties.

Appropriate adjustments may include:

- modified arrival arrangements;
- additional support on arrival;
- a named trusted adult;
- reduced environmental triggers;
- sensory adjustments;
- adapted learning; and
- phased or supported reintegration where appropriate.

Adjustments will be agreed with relevant professionals and, where appropriate, the commissioning school.

## 20. Children Known to Social Care

For students known to social care, attendance concerns will be considered alongside wider safeguarding circumstances.

IWYS will share relevant information with appropriate professionals where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the students' welfare.

## 21. Children Missing Education

IWYS will take immediate action where there are concerns that a student may be missing education.

- attempting contact with parents/carers;
- contacting the commissioning school;
- checking known contact information;
- reviewing safeguarding information;
- contacting relevant professionals; and
- notifying the local authority where appropriate.

## 22. Holidays During Term Time

Parents/carers should not arrange term-time holidays. Leave requests will be considered under current law, DfE guidance and the students' circumstances.

Leave should not normally be assumed to be authorised simply because a request has been made.

## 23. Unauthorised Absence

Absence may be recorded as unauthorised where:

- no acceptable reason has been provided;
- the reason provided is not accepted as a valid reason under the attendance framework;
- required evidence has not been provided where reasonably requested;
- leave has not been authorised; or
- the student is absent without permission.

Each case will be considered individually and communicated to the commissioning school and/or local authority as appropriate.

## 24. Attendance Data and Monitoring

Attendance will be monitored at:

- individual student level;
- group level;
- whole-setting level;
- weekly level;
- termly level;
- academic-year level.

IWYS will look for patterns such as:

- persistent absence;
- severe absence;
- repeated lateness;
- particular days of absence;
- particular lessons or activities;
- changes following interventions; and
- attendance differences between student groups.

## 25. Attendance Targets

IWYS will promote attendance that enables students to benefit fully from education.

Individual targets may be agreed where a student is experiencing significant attendance difficulties. Targets should be:

- realistic;
- measurable;
- time-limited;
- reviewed regularly; and
- appropriate to the student's circumstances.

## 26. Rewards and Recognition

IWYS may recognise:

- improved attendance;
- improved punctuality;
- successful reintegration;
- improved engagement;
- sustained attendance; and
- individual progress.

Recognition may include:

- verbal praise;
- certificates;
- positive contact with parents/carers;
- student recognition; and
- appropriate rewards.

Rewards will not replace support for significant attendance barriers.

## 27. Attendance and Behaviour

Attendance and behaviour are linked but considered separately; behaviour should not automatically lead to absence from education.

Where behaviour difficulties affect attendance, IWYS will consider:

- the reason for the behaviour;
- safeguarding;
- SEND;
- unmet needs;
- bullying;
- peer relationships;
- curriculum engagement; and
- appropriate support and intervention.

Any suspension or exclusion will be managed under the relevant statutory requirements and IWYS procedures.

## 28. Attendance Meetings

Attendance meetings may involve:

- the student;
- parent/carer;
- IWYS Attendance Lead;
- Headteacher/Head of Provision;
- commissioning school;
- local authority representative; and
- other relevant professionals.

The meeting should identify:

5. current attendance;
6. attendance patterns;
7. barriers;
8. actions already taken;
9. further support required;
10. agreed responsibilities; and
11. review date.

## 29. Partnership with Parents and Carers

IWYS will build positive relationships with parents/carers through respectful, timely, clear and proportionate communication.

When attendance is a concern, IWYS will work with families rather than focus only on sanctions.

## 30. Partnership with Commissioning Schools

IWYS will share appropriate attendance information with commissioning schools to support monitoring, safeguarding and coordinated planning.

## 31. Attendance During Off-Site Education

Where students undertake approved off-site education or activities, IWYS will ensure attendance arrangements are clearly established.

This may include:

- vocational placements;
- college placements;
- educational visits;
- work experience;
- sports activities;
- community-based education; and
- other approved educational activities.

Responsibilities for recording attendance will be agreed in advance.

## 32. Staff Training

Relevant staff will receive appropriate information and training regarding:

- attendance procedures;
- attendance codes;
- safeguarding and absence;
- persistent and severe absence;
- children missing education;
- SEND-related barriers;
- medical absence; and
- communication with parents/carers.

### 33. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Attendance information will be handled in line with data protection requirements.

Information may be shared with relevant agencies where there is a lawful basis and where sharing is necessary to:

- safeguard a child;
- support attendance;
- meet statutory responsibilities; and
- coordinate education and support.

### 34. Records

IWYS will retain appropriate records relating to:

- attendance;
- absence;
- lateness;
- contact with parents/carers;
- attendance meetings;
- attendance support plans;
- interventions;
- referrals; and
- relevant safeguarding concerns.

Records will be maintained securely.

### 35. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- |                                        |                                              |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| • legislation changes;                 | •                                            |
| • DfE guidance changes;                | • IWYS procedures change; or                 |
| • local authority requirements change; | • monitoring identifies a need for revision. |

Reviews will use the latest DfE statutory attendance guidance.

## Appendix 1 – Attendance Concern Flowchart

|           |                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Student absent</b>                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Has a reason been provided?</b>                                                                                                                            |
| <b>3A</b> | YES → Record the appropriate attendance code → Consider whether absence is authorised → Continue monitoring                                                   |
| <b>3B</b> | NO → Contact parent/carer/appropriate contact → Establish reason → Consider safeguarding                                                                      |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Is there an emerging attendance concern?</b>                                                                                                               |
| <b>5A</b> | NO → Continue routine monitoring                                                                                                                              |
| <b>5B</b> | YES → Identify barriers → Speak with student and family → Consider support                                                                                    |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>Has attendance improved?</b>                                                                                                                               |
| <b>7A</b> | YES → Continue monitoring and recognise improvement                                                                                                           |
| <b>7B</b> | NO → Attendance Support Plan → Involve commissioning school/relevant professionals                                                                            |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Continued significant absence → Formal attendance review → Consider further support/referral/escalation in accordance with current statutory guidance.</b> |

## Appendix 2 – Attendance Categories

| Category                      | Meaning                                                                 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Present                       | Student is present for the required session.                            |
| Late                          | Student arrives after the expected start time.                          |
| Authorised absence            | Absence accepted under the applicable attendance framework.             |
| Unauthorised absence          | Absence without an acceptable/authorised reason.                        |
| Approved educational activity | Student is undertaking approved education away from the normal setting. |
| Medical absence               | Absence due to illness or medical circumstances.                        |
| Safeguarding concern          | Absence requiring safeguarding consideration.                           |
| Persistent absence            | 10% or more sessions missed.                                            |
| Severe absence                | 50% or more sessions missed.                                            |

## Appendix 3 – Key Attendance Principle

**Every absence should prompt the question:**

“Why is this student not attending, and what can we do to help?”

This reflects DfE guidance to identify barriers, intervene early and work with families and partners.

## Key Guidance and Reference Documents

The following documents should be checked at each policy review to ensure this policy remains current:

- Department for Education – Working Together to Improve School Attendance.
- Department for Education – Children Missing Education.
- Department for Education – Alternative Provision statutory guidance.
- Department for Education – Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions.

### Document control reminder

Review this policy against current legislation and statutory guidance before adoption and after significant national or local changes.

| Document control      | Details                                                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Applies to</b>     | All students, staff, parents/carers and relevant partners |
| <b>Approved By</b>    | Charmaine Baines - Headteacher / Head of Provision        |
| <b>Effective from</b> | September 2026                                            |
| <b>Review date</b>    | September 2027                                            |