

CHILDREN ABSENT FROM EDUCATION AND ATTENDANCE POLICY 2026–2027

Avenue House School



Approved by	Governors & Headteacher
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1. Statement of Intent

AHS is committed to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality for all pupils. Regular attendance is fundamental to safeguarding, educational achievement, wellbeing, personal development and successful future outcomes.

The School recognises that children who are absent from education or who become children missing education may be at increased risk of:

- abuse and neglect;
- child criminal exploitation;
- child sexual exploitation;
- radicalisation;
- trafficking;
- forced marriage;
- mental health difficulties;
- poor educational outcomes.

Attendance is therefore regarded as a core safeguarding responsibility of all staff.

The School is committed to working collaboratively with pupils, parents, governors, local authorities and other agencies to promote and support regular attendance.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy has regard to:

- Education Act 1996;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026);
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance;
- Independent School Standards Guidance (April 2026). This policy supports compliance with the Independent School Standards relating to:
- welfare, health and safety;

- safeguarding and child protection;
- leadership and management;
- promotion of pupils' wellbeing.

3. Objectives

The aims of this policy are to:

- promote excellent attendance and punctuality;
- identify and address barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity;
- ensure attendance concerns are recognised as potential safeguarding concerns;
- reduce persistent and severe absence;
- fulfil all statutory attendance responsibilities;
- identify and safeguard children missing education;
- support vulnerable pupils through targeted intervention;
- ensure effective partnership working with families.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- promote attendance as a safeguarding priority;
- review attendance data at least termly;
- monitor persistent and severe absence;
- challenge and support school leaders regarding attendance outcomes;
- monitor attendance among vulnerable groups;
- ensure adequate resources are available to support attendance;
- review the effectiveness of attendance interventions.

Attendance forms part of the governors' safeguarding oversight responsibilities.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- ensure implementation of this policy;
- promote a culture of excellent attendance;
- ensure statutory duties are fulfilled;
- oversee attendance improvement strategies;
- ensure attendance remains a safeguarding priority.

Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion will:

- monitor attendance patterns;
- oversee interventions;
- support families experiencing attendance difficulties;
- coordinate attendance improvement strategies;
- report attendance data to senior leaders and governors.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will:

- assess safeguarding concerns arising from poor attendance;
- oversee children missing education procedures;
- coordinate referrals to external agencies;
- advise staff regarding attendance-related safeguarding concerns;
- ensure attendance concerns are recorded appropriately.

Attendance Officer

Where applicable, the Attendance Officer will:

- monitor daily attendance;
- undertake first-day response procedures;

- maintain attendance records;
- arrange attendance meetings;
- liaise with parents and carers.

Staff

All staff will:

- promote positive attendance;
- accurately complete attendance registers;
- challenge avoidable absence;
- identify attendance concerns;
- report any safeguarding concerns associated with absence.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- ensure their child attends regularly;
- notify the School on the first day of absence;
- provide accurate reasons for absence;
- engage positively with support offered by the School;
- engage in attendance meetings when requested.

5. Attendance Expectations

The School expects every pupil to attend:

- every day that the School is open;
- on time;
- ready to learn.

The School will actively promote a culture where good attendance is valued, recognised and celebrated.

6. Registration Procedures

Attendance registers will be taken:

- at the beginning of each morning session;
- at the beginning of each afternoon session.

Registers will be:

- maintained electronically where appropriate;
- completed accurately;
- completed in accordance with statutory requirements;
- retained securely.

The School will use attendance codes prescribed by the Department for Education.

7. Reporting Absence

Parents and carers must notify the School on the first day of absence and each subsequent day unless otherwise agreed.

Notification should include:

- pupil name;
- reason for absence;
- expected duration of absence.

The School may request medical evidence where:

- absence is prolonged;
- attendance is causing concern;
- repeated illness absences occur.

8. First-Day Absence and Escalation Procedures

Where a pupil is absent and no explanation has been received:

Day One

The School will:

- contact parents and carers using all available contact details;
- review attendance history;

- record all communication attempts;
- consider safeguarding information.

Day Two

Where contact has not been established:

- further contact attempts will be made;
- emergency contacts may be contacted;
- concerns will be reviewed with safeguarding staff.

Day Three

Where attendance remains unexplained:

- the DSL will review the circumstances;
- reasonable enquiries will be undertaken;
- a welfare check may be considered;
- consultation with external agencies may occur where appropriate.

All actions will be recorded.

9. Punctuality

Punctual attendance is expected.

The School will monitor:

- late arrival;
- repeated lateness;
- patterns of lateness.

Parents will be contacted where lateness becomes a concern.

Persistent lateness may result in attendance intervention.

10. Monitoring Attendance

Attendance will be monitored daily, weekly and termly.

The School will analyse attendance data to identify:

- emerging concerns;

- vulnerable pupils;
- groups requiring support;
- persistent absence trends;
- severe absence trends.

Early intervention will be prioritised.

11. Persistent and Severe Absence

The School follows current national definitions.

Persistent Absence

Attendance below 90%.

Severe Absence

Attendance below 50%.

Where persistent or severe absence is identified the School will:

- meet with parents;
- identify barriers to attendance;
- implement an attendance support plan;
- review progress regularly;
- involve appropriate external services where required.

12. Attendance of Vulnerable Pupils

Additional support will be provided for:

- pupils with SEND;
- pupils with medical needs;
- pupils with mental health difficulties;
- children looked after;
- previously looked after children;
- pupils with social workers;
- young carers;

- pupils experiencing family difficulties;
- pupils experiencing bereavement;
- pupils at risk of exclusion.

Support may include:

- personalised attendance plans;
- reasonable adjustments;
- pastoral support;
- multi-agency involvement;
- safeguarding intervention.

13. Attendance Support and Early Help

The School recognises that attendance difficulties are often linked to wider issues.

The School will:

- work collaboratively with families;
- understand barriers to attendance;
- provide support wherever possible;
- engage with external services where appropriate;
- consider Early Help referrals where necessary.

Supportive intervention will always be prioritised before formal action wherever appropriate.

14. Leave of Absence

Parents must submit requests for leave of absence, in writing, in advance.

The Headteacher will determine whether absence can be authorised.

The School will take account of:

- exceptional circumstances;
- educational impact;
- safeguarding considerations;
- guidance and statutory requirements.

Family holidays during term time will normally not be authorised unless exceptional circumstances apply.

15. Children Absent from Education

The School recognises that children absent from education may be at heightened safeguarding risk.

Patterns of concern may include:

- unexplained absence;
- repeated absence;
- prolonged absence;
- attendance below expected levels;
- repeated lateness.

Attendance concerns will be considered alongside other safeguarding information.

16. Children Missing Education (CME)

The School recognises that children missing education are particularly vulnerable to:

- abuse;
- neglect;
- exploitation;
- trafficking;
- radicalisation;
- criminal exploitation.

Where a pupil's whereabouts are unknown, the School will undertake reasonable enquiries including:

- contacting parents and carers;
- contacting emergency contacts;
- reviewing attendance and safeguarding records;
- checking known addresses;
- liaising with relevant schools or agencies;

- consulting local authority services where appropriate.

The School will:

- maintain clear records of all enquiries;
- retain evidence of actions taken;
- notify the local authority where required;
- comply with statutory notification duties.

No pupil will be removed from the Admission Register except in accordance with statutory regulations.

17. Safeguarding and Attendance

Attendance is a safeguarding matter.

The School recognises that:

- persistent absence;
- severe absence;
- unexplained absence;
- repeated lateness;
- irregular attendance patterns;

may indicate safeguarding concerns.

Attendance data will be considered alongside:

- safeguarding records;
- pastoral concerns;
- wellbeing concerns;
- behaviour information.

Where risk is identified, the School may involve:

- Children's Social Care;
- the Police;
- health services;
- local authority services;
- other relevant agencies.

18. Attendance Training

The School will ensure that staff receive appropriate training on:

- attendance responsibilities;
- attendance recording procedures;
- safeguarding and attendance;
- children missing education;
- attendance escalation procedures;
- statutory requirements.

Attendance training will form part of induction for all new staff.

Relevant leaders will receive enhanced attendance training appropriate to their responsibilities.

19. Attendance Intervention Records

The School will maintain records of:

- attendance meetings;
- support plans;
- parental communication;
- safeguarding decisions;
- referrals;
- reasonable adjustments;
- intervention outcomes.

Records will be maintained securely in accordance with data protection requirements.

20. Working with External Agencies

The School may work with:

- Local Authorities;
- Children's Social Care;
- Early Help Services;
- Educational Psychologists;

- CAMHS and other health professionals;
- attendance support services;
- Police and safeguarding partners.

Information sharing will take place in accordance with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

21. Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention

Where appropriate, the School may refer attendance concerns to the Local Authority.

The Local Authority may consider:

- penalty notices;
- attendance contracts;
- legal intervention;
- prosecution under relevant legislation.

The School will cooperate fully with local authority attendance procedures.

22. Data Protection

Attendance records will be managed in accordance with:

- UK GDPR;
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- School Records Retention Policies.

Access to records will be restricted to authorised staff.

23. Policy Communication

This policy will be:

- published on the School website;
- available to parents on request;
- available to staff;
- explained through induction and training processes.

Attendance expectations will be regularly communicated to pupils and families.

24. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy annually or sooner if:

- legislation changes;
- statutory guidance changes;
- inspection findings require amendment;
- operational improvements are identified.

The Headteacher and Governors are responsible for ensuring this policy remains effective, compliant and aligned with current guidance.