

Attendance Policy

1. Statement of intent

At Wirral Health Project CIC (WHP), we recognise that regular attendance and punctuality are crucial to the success, wellbeing, and long-term outcomes of the young people in our care. We are committed to working in close partnership with schools, parents/carers, and external agencies to support consistent attendance and identify barriers that may prevent a learner from attending.

As an Alternative Provision, many of our learners face complex challenges, including social, emotional, or behavioural needs. Therefore, we take a supportive, proactive, and trauma-informed approach to improving attendance while maintaining high expectations for engagement.

2. Aims of this policy

This policy aims to:

- Promote the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff, schools, and parents/carers.
- Set out the procedures for monitoring, recording, and reporting attendance.
- Detail the steps taken in the event of absence or persistent absence.
- Ensure attendance is treated as a safeguarding concern when appropriate.
- Encourage a whole-setting approach to early identification and intervention.

3. Legal and statutory context

This policy is informed by:

- DfE: *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (2022)
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2023)
- The Education Act 1996 & 2002
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)

Although WHP does not hold the legal responsibility for a pupil's statutory attendance (this remains with the commissioning school), we fully support and contribute to attendance strategies and safeguarding duties in line with statutory expectations.

4. Roles and responsibilities

We will:

- Maintain accurate daily registers (AM and PM) using internal systems.
- Record attendance and reasons for absence consistently.
- Contact parents/carers by phone or text on the first day of any absence, and escalate to school if no contact is made.
- Notify the referring/commissioning school of any non-attendance, using agreed communication channels (e.g. CPOMS, email, call).
- Work collaboratively with schools and families to identify and remove barriers to attendance.

- Participate in or lead on attendance improvement plans or early help strategies where appropriate.
- Raise concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if attendance may be linked to a wider welfare issue.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends the provision on time every day.
- Inform the provision before 9:30am if their child will be absent, explaining the reason.
- Work with the provision and school to support attendance strategies.
- Attend review meetings if attendance or punctuality becomes a concern.

Commissioning schools will:

- Monitor and retain overall statutory responsibility for attendance.
- Set out agreed expectations for communication and reporting with the AP.
- Attend or lead multi-agency meetings where attendance is a concern.
- Support appropriate interventions or referrals.

5. Recording attendance

- A daily register will be taken at the start of each session - morning and afternoon.
- Attendance data will be shared with the referring school at agreed intervals (daily/weekly), using agreed communication methods, and in line with any Service Level Agreement (SLA).
- All attendance records are held securely and in accordance with GDPR and safeguarding legislation.

6. Absence procedures

First-day absence

- If a student is absent and no notification has been received, a member of staff will contact the parent/carer by phone and/or text message as early as possible.
- If no response is received, further attempts will be made throughout the day. A home visit or safeguarding escalation may follow if concerns persist. This will be discussed with school.

Ongoing or persistent absence

- As an Alternative Provision, we follow the guidance of the commissioning schools regarding persistent absence. It is expected that absence which falls below 90% will trigger a review with the school and parents/carers, and a multi-agency approach will be adopted where appropriate.
- Where poor attendance is linked to unmet needs (e.g. SEND, mental health, family issues), adjustments will be made in collaboration and agreement with school and parents/carers.

7. Punctuality

- Students are expected to arrive on time for sessions.
- Late arrivals will be recorded, and patterns of lateness will be discussed with the student and parent/carer.

- Persistent lateness will be referred to the commissioning school and may be addressed via an attendance plan.

8. Supporting attendance

We aim to foster a culture where good attendance is recognised, supported, and celebrated. We will:

- Build positive relationships with students and families to understand barriers.
- Offer individualised support plans to address needs impacting attendance.
- Create a welcoming, safe and engaging environment that students want to attend.
- Recognise and celebrate improvements or consistent attendance.
- Encourage student voice around barriers to attendance and engagement.

9. Safeguarding and attendance

Poor or irregular attendance can be an indicator of safeguarding concerns including neglect, abuse, exploitation, or hidden harms (e.g. child criminal/sexual exploitation).

All staff are trained to:

- Recognise attendance as a key safeguarding indicator.
- Record concerns and escalate to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Work with the school's DSL and external agencies to ensure appropriate support is in place.

10. Term-time leave

As an AP, we follow the guidance of the commissioning schools regarding requests for leave during term-time. We do not authorise holidays or travel during term unless agreed with the school.

11. Policy compliance and accessibility

This policy is available to all staff, families, and referring schools. A simplified version can be made available for students upon request.

Policy review

This policy is reviewed annually and following any major incidents or changes in statutory guidance.

Approved by: Adam McCreevy

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Designated Safeguarding Lead: Adam McCreevy

Number: 07734151176

Email: Adam@wirralhealthproject.co.uk