

Attendance, Engagement and Inclusion Policy – August 2026

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Purpose, Scope and Principles

AS2Educate is committed to promoting excellent attendance, positive engagement and inclusion by creating a safe, supportive and trauma-informed environment where every child and young person feels valued, respected and able to achieve their potential.

We recognise that regular attendance is fundamental to educational achievement, emotional wellbeing, safeguarding and positive life outcomes. We also recognise that attendance difficulties often reflect underlying needs rather than a lack of willingness to attend. Our approach therefore focuses on understanding and addressing barriers to attendance through positive relationships, early intervention and collaborative working with families and partner agencies.

AS2Educate recognises that attendance is about more than physical presence. We are equally committed to promoting engagement, participation, belonging and positive relationships. Our aim is not only to improve attendance but to support every learner to access education successfully, develop resilience and achieve positive outcomes.

As a non-school Alternative Provision, AS2Educate works closely with commissioning Local Authorities, schools, parents, carers and other professionals to support attendance and engagement while recognising the individual circumstances of every learner. Attendance responsibilities are shared between AS2Educate, commissioning organisations, parents/carers, learners and partner agencies, with all parties working collaboratively to promote regular attendance and remove barriers to education.

Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This Policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Education Act 1996;
- Children Act 1989;
- Children Act 2004;
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Department for Education);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- Equality Act 2010;
- SEND Code of Practice (2015);
- Children Missing Education statutory guidance; and
- relevant Local Authority attendance procedures.

Attendance and Safeguarding

Regular attendance is an essential safeguarding measure.

AS2Educate recognises that attendance concerns may indicate wider safeguarding concerns and staff will always consider whether absence, poor punctuality or changing attendance patterns may be associated with:

- abuse or neglect;
- domestic abuse;
- child criminal exploitation;

- child sexual exploitation;
- child-on-child abuse;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- county lines;
- mental health difficulties;
- emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA);
- family breakdown;
- bereavement;
- unmet SEND needs;
- medical needs; or
- other welfare concerns.

Attendance concerns will never be viewed in isolation. Staff will exercise professional curiosity and, where appropriate, refer concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Repeated, persistent, prolonged or unexplained absence, including patterns of absence across particular days, sessions or circumstances, will be considered as a potential safeguarding indicator. Staff will consider what the pattern of attendance may be communicating about the child's safety, wellbeing and circumstances rather than relying solely on the overall attendance percentage.

Equality, Inclusion and Trauma-Informed Practice

AS2Educate recognises that children and young people accessing Alternative Provision often experience complex barriers to education.

Attendance difficulties may arise because of trauma, anxiety, neurodiversity, SEND, medical conditions, adverse childhood experiences, family circumstances or other vulnerabilities.

Attendance support will therefore be individualised and will:

- promote emotional safety;
- recognise individual strengths;
- The learner's views will be actively sought when attendance difficulties emerge. Staff will seek to understand what the learner believes is making attendance difficult, what helps them feel safe and able to engage, and what changes or support they believe may improve their access to education.
- consider reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010;
- work collaboratively with families and professionals; and
- avoid punitive approaches wherever possible.

Promoting Good Attendance

AS2Educate promotes attendance by:

- building positive relationships with learners and families;
- providing a welcoming and inclusive environment;
- celebrating improvements in attendance and engagement;
- monitoring attendance regularly;
- identifying concerns at the earliest opportunity;

- providing appropriate pastoral and therapeutic support;
- maintaining regular communication with families;
- working collaboratively with commissioning organisations; and
- supporting learners to overcome barriers to attendance.

Attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Roles and Responsibilities

Deputy Provision Manager / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Deputy Provision Manager, who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), has day-to-day responsibility for monitoring attendance, identifying emerging concerns and coordinating early intervention.

The Deputy Provision Manager / DSL will:

- monitor attendance and punctuality on a daily basis;
- identify patterns of absence and emerging attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity;
- ensure attendance concerns are considered alongside safeguarding, welfare and wellbeing needs;
- work proactively with learners, parents/carers, commissioning organisations and partner agencies to identify and address barriers to attendance;
- coordinate appropriate attendance interventions and support plans;
- maintain accurate attendance records and ensure appropriate information is shared where there is a lawful basis to do so; and
- report significant attendance concerns, trends and safeguarding issues to the Provision Manager.

Provision Manager

The Provision Manager retains overall responsibility and accountability for attendance arrangements across AS2Educate and will work closely with the Deputy Provision Manager / DSL to ensure attendance is promoted effectively and statutory responsibilities are met.

The Provision Manager will:

- provide strategic oversight of attendance arrangements;
- support decisions relating to complex attendance, safeguarding and welfare matters;
- ensure appropriate interventions are implemented where attendance concerns persist;
- oversee compliance with statutory attendance requirements and Local Authority expectations;
- review attendance data, trends and outcomes to inform continuous improvement; and
- ensure appropriate resources, staffing and support are available to promote positive attendance and engagement.

Staff

All staff will:

- promote positive attendance;
- build trusting relationships with learners;
- identify emerging attendance concerns;

- record attendance accurately;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately;
- contribute to attendance support planning; and
- work collaboratively with families and professionals.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- ensure their child attends regularly unless prevented by illness or exceptional circumstances;
- notify AS2Educate of absence promptly;
- work collaboratively with staff;
- attend meetings where appropriate; and
- support agreed attendance plans.

Commissioning and Placing Organisations

AS2Educate recognises that learners may remain on the roll of a commissioning school or may be placed through a Local Authority or other commissioning arrangement. The statutory attendance responsibilities applying to the learner will therefore depend upon the nature of the placement and registration arrangements.

AS2Educate will maintain accurate records of attendance at the provision and will communicate absence, attendance patterns and safeguarding concerns promptly to the relevant commissioning or placing organisation in accordance with agreed arrangements. The commissioning or placing organisation retains those statutory responsibilities which legally remain with it and which cannot be transferred to AS2Educate through the placement arrangement.

Where responsibilities are shared, AS2Educate will work collaboratively to ensure that there is no gap in attendance monitoring, safeguarding response or support for the learner.

Attendance Monitoring and Early Intervention

Attendance is monitored daily.

Where attendance begins to decline, AS2Educate will implement supportive interventions at the earliest opportunity rather than waiting for attendance to reach a specific threshold.

Support may include:

- discussions with the learner;
- meetings with parents or carers;
- mentoring;
- pastoral support;
- reasonable adjustments;
- timetable adjustments where appropriate;
- referral to external agencies;
- multi-agency meetings; and
- attendance support plans.
- liaison regarding transport arrangements where these may be affecting attendance.

Attendance Recording and Reporting

Attendance is recorded electronically using Learntrek, AS2Educate's Management Information System (MIS).

Attendance registers are completed promptly at the start of each session and will normally be recorded within 30 minutes of the learner's expected arrival time.

Where a learner is absent and no prior notification has been received, AS2Educate will make reasonable efforts to contact the learner's parent, carer or other appropriate emergency contact as soon as possible to establish the reason for the absence and to ensure the learner's welfare. Where there are immediate safeguarding concerns, contact may be made sooner and appropriate safeguarding procedures will be followed without delay.

Attendance information is monitored daily and shared, where appropriate and there is a lawful basis to do so, with:

- commissioning Local Authorities;
- mainstream schools where a learner remains dual registered or on roll;
- attendance services;
- other professionals involved in supporting the learner; and
- safeguarding partners where required.

AS2Educate recognises that accurate and timely attendance recording is an important safeguarding responsibility. Attendance information is used to identify emerging patterns, monitor engagement, inform support planning and ensure that any safeguarding concerns are responded to promptly.

Persistent and Severe Absence

AS2Educate recognises the Department for Education definitions of:

- **Persistent Absence** – attendance below 90%.
- **Severe Absence** – attendance below 50%.

Learners identified within either category will receive enhanced support, including regular reviews, attendance planning and, where appropriate, involvement of commissioning organisations, Local Authorities and other partner agencies.

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

AS2Educate recognises that some attendance difficulties arise because of anxiety, trauma or emotional distress.

Where attendance concerns are linked to emotionally based school avoidance, the focus will be on understanding the underlying causes, reducing anxiety, maintaining relationships and implementing graduated support rather than punitive responses.

Children Missing Education

AS2Educate recognises that children being absent from education, particularly where absence is repeated, prolonged, unexplained or forms part of a concerning pattern, can be an important safeguarding warning sign. Absence may indicate abuse, neglect, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, county lines activity, domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, harmful peer relationships, forced marriage or other safeguarding concerns.

Staff must remain professionally curious about patterns of absence and must not view attendance concerns solely as an educational, behavioural or compliance matter. Where absence raises a safeguarding concern, this must be reported promptly to the DSL or DDSL and considered alongside all other information known about the child.

Where AS2Educate has reason to believe that a child may be missing education, it will act without delay in accordance with statutory Children Missing Education guidance and the procedures of the relevant Local Authority. AS2Educate will work with the child's placing or commissioning authority, school where applicable, parents/carers and other professionals to establish the child's whereabouts, understand the reasons for absence and ensure that appropriate safeguarding action is taken.

AS2Educate will not assume that another organisation has taken action where there is a concern about a child's welfare. Responsibilities for follow-up, information sharing and escalation will be made clear between AS2Educate and the relevant commissioning or placing organisation

Reporting Absence

Parents and carers should notify AS2Educate as soon as possible on the first day of absence and maintain regular communication while the learner remains absent.

Where appropriate, AS2Educate may request medical evidence to support prolonged or repeated illness.

Where a learner is absent and no contact can be established, AS2Educate will take reasonable steps to establish the learner's welfare, which may include telephone calls, welfare visits (where appropriate), liaison with commissioning organisations or referral to the Local Authority where safeguarding concerns exist.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

We recognise that sometimes children may be unable to attend due to a variety of reasons, and it is important for us to understand the cause of any absence so we can offer the right support.

Authorised absences are sessions missed for genuine and unavoidable reasons, such as illness (we may ask for medical evidence when appropriate), medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside school hours, emergencies, or other exceptional circumstances agreed with the Provision Manager.

Unauthorised absences are those for which no permission has been granted and which AS2 does not consider reasonable. These absences can have serious consequences, including possible involvement of the Local Authority, who may issue penalty notices or take legal action. This could involve fines or, in rare cases, court proceedings.

Examples of unauthorised absences include, but are not limited to:

- Keeping a child off unnecessarily, for example due to a late night or a minor illness that does not impact their ability to learn.
- Absences without a clear explanation.
- Arriving after the official registration period ('U' mark) which means the child is recorded as absent for that session, although present for safeguarding.
- Non-urgent activities such as shopping trips, caring for siblings, or accompanying family members to appointments.
- Celebrating birthdays during school time.
- Holidays during term time without prior authorisation or not meeting the criteria for exceptional circumstances.
- Day trips or other leave not approved by the Provision Manager.

Where contact cannot be established, staff will consider the learner's known vulnerabilities, previous attendance patterns, current safeguarding information and the circumstances of the absence in determining the appropriate level of response. This may include further attempts to contact parents/carers or emergency contacts, contact with the commissioning school or Local Authority, consultation with the DSL/DDSL, liaison with other professionals, a welfare visit where appropriate, or referral to Children's Social Care or the Police where there is an immediate or significant concern for the child's safety.

There is no requirement to wait for a particular period of absence before taking safeguarding action. Where there is reason to believe that a child may be at immediate risk, safeguarding procedures will be initiated without delay.

Leave During Term Time

Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised where the Provision Manager is satisfied that exceptional circumstances apply, having regard to statutory guidance and the individual circumstances of the learner.

Information Sharing

Attendance information may be shared with:

- commissioning Local Authorities;
- schools;
- safeguarding partners;
- Children's Social Care;
- attendance services; and
- other professionals involved with supporting the learner,

- where there is a lawful basis to do so and in accordance with AS2Educate's Information Governance, Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

Information will be shared proportionately, on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and AS2Educate's Information Governance, Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

Monitoring and Review

The Deputy Provision Manager / Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor attendance, punctuality, persistent absence, severe absence, attendance interventions and safeguarding concerns linked to attendance throughout the academic year.

The Provision Manager will provide strategic oversight by reviewing attendance trends, analysing outcomes and ensuring that appropriate systems, resources and interventions are in place to promote attendance and engagement.

Learning from attendance data will be used to strengthen practice, improve provision and enhance outcomes for learners.

This Policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to legislation, statutory guidance or operational practice require earlier review.

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Ratified by:	Provision Manager and DSL
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