



Attendance & Engagement policy

Approved by:
The Directors of Strive Alternative Provision

Signed on behalf of the Directors by:
Stacey Hickey, Provision Manager

Date Approved: July 2025
Review Date: July 2026

1. Purpose and Rationale

Strive Alternative Provision is committed to supporting children and young people to engage in education consistently, safely and meaningfully.

We recognize that for many pupils attending alternative provision, poor attendance is often linked to unmet needs, trauma, anxiety, neurodivergence, or previous negative experiences of education. Attendance is therefore approached as a safeguarding and wellbeing matter, not solely a compliance issue.

Regular attendance supports:

- Educational progress and positive outcomes
- Emotional regulation and routine
- Safeguarding and protective oversight

Persistent absence places children and young people at increased risk of harm, exploitation, and disengagement.

2. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by and aligns with the following legislation and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE School Attendance Guidance (most recent)

While Strive operates as an Alternative Provision and does not hold statutory enforcement powers, attendance is monitored in line with safeguarding expectations and in partnership with commissioning schools and local authorities.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All children and young people attending Strive Alternative Provision
- Parents and carers
- Commissioning schools and local authorities
- All Strive staff, volunteers and contractors

4. Attendance as a Safeguarding Matter

In line with KCSIE 2025, Strive recognizes that:

- Persistent absence
- Patterns of lateness
- Emotionally based school avoidance
- Non-engagement

may indicate safeguarding concerns.

All attendance concerns are considered through a safeguarding lens and escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where appropriate.

5. Aims

Strive aims to:

- Support all pupils to attend regularly and safely
- Identify barriers to attendance early
- Work collaboratively with families, referrers and agencies
- Ensure no child “slips through the net”
- Maintain accurate attendance records
- Respond swiftly to unexplained absence

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Oversees attendance where safeguarding concerns are present
- Determines escalation to Early Help or statutory services

Provision Manager / Lead

- Monitors daily attendance
- Follows up unexplained absences
- Communicates concerns to referrers and DSL
- Coordinates attendance support plans

Staff

- Record attendance accurately
- Report non-attendance promptly
- Remain professionally curious about patterns or changes

Parents / Carers

- Support regular attendance
- Notify Strive of absence promptly
- Engage with attendance planning and support

Commissioning Schools / Local Authorities

- Retain statutory responsibility for attendance enforcement
- Work in partnership with Strive to address concerns

7. Attendance Monitoring and Registers

- Attendance is recorded daily using Strive's attendance registers
- Registers are completed at the start of each session
- Records are retained securely in line with data protection requirements
- Attendance data is shared with commissioning schools or local authorities as agreed

8. Unplanned Absence

Parents/carers or referrers must notify Strive on the first day of absence, before the start of the session where possible.

Where a pupil does not attend and no notification has been received:

- Contact is attempted within 30 minutes
- All attempts are logged
- The referrer is informed
- Safeguarding action is considered

Repeated unexplained absences will be escalated.

9. Persistent Absence and Non-Engagement

Where attendance concerns persist, Strive will:

- Review patterns of absence
- Meet with parents/carers and referrers
- Implement an individual attendance support plan
- Consider Early Help or safeguarding referral

If attendance does not improve despite support, Strive may review the suitability of the placement in line with the Admissions and Exit Criteria.

10. Medical Appointments

- Medical or dental appointments should be made outside placement hours where possible
- Where unavoidable, absences will be authorized if notified in advance
- Evidence may be requested where absence becomes frequent

11. Lateness and Punctuality

- Pupils arriving after their agreed start time but within the session window are recorded as late
- Pupils arriving after the session has closed may be recorded as absent
- Patterns of lateness are monitored and shared with referrers

12. Communication and Reporting

Strive will:

- Communicate attendance concerns promptly with parents/carers and referrers
- Share attendance data as agreed at referral stage
- Maintain open communication to support engagement

13. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

14. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

Attendance trends and concerns are reviewed by senior leaders and form part of safeguarding oversight.

15. Policy Update Summary

Update Area	Change	Reason
Attendance & Safeguarding	Attendance explicitly linked to safeguarding	KCSIE 2025
Legislation	Updated and corrected legal references	Compliance
Roles	Clarified AP vs statutory responsibilities	Accuracy
Escalation	DSL oversight added	Safeguarding
Language	Trauma-informed, AP-appropriate wording	Best practice

END OF POLICY