



Attendance & Engagement policy

Approved by:
The Directors of Strive Alternative Provision

Signed on behalf of the Directors by:
Stacey Hickey, Head of Operations

Date Approved: October 2026
Review Date: October 2027

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 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- 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: Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026)
- DfE: Alternative Provision statutory guidance (2025)
- Information Sharing to Safeguard Children and Young People statutory guidance (2026)

Strive is a commissioned alternative provision and is not the pupil's statutory registering school. The commissioning school and/or local authority retains its statutory attendance responsibilities, including the statutory admission and attendance register, use of attendance codes, and any formal attendance enforcement. Strive records attendance at the sessions it delivers, follows up absence promptly, shares accurate attendance information with commissioners and contributes to attendance support and safeguarding action.

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 2026, Strive recognises that absence from education, persistent absence, lateness and changes in engagement can be indicators of safeguarding concerns. Strive therefore remains professionally curious about:

- 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

SEND Admin/ Provision Manager

- 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, including absence and lateness, is shared with commissioning schools or local authorities at the agreed frequency and sooner where there is a safeguarding concern or significant change in engagement.
- Where a pupil is expected at Strive and does not attend, Strive will provide the commissioning school/local authority with timely information so that the commissioner can maintain an accurate statutory register and fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities.

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 commissioning school or local authority is informed promptly, in line with the agreed reporting arrangements
- Safeguarding action is considered

Repeated or concerning unexplained absence will be escalated to the DSL and commissioning school/local authority. Where there is reason to believe a child may be at immediate risk of harm, Strive will act without delay in accordance with its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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

- Parents/carers are encouraged to arrange routine medical or dental appointments outside placement hours where reasonably possible
- Where an appointment during placement hours is unavoidable, Strive will record the reason and notify/share information with the commissioning school or local authority as appropriate. The commissioning school remains responsible for the statutory attendance code used on its register.
- Evidence may be requested where absence becomes frequent

11. Lateness and Punctuality

- Pupils arriving after their agreed Strive start time are recorded as late on Strive's internal attendance record
- Where a pupil does not attend enough of the agreed session for Strive to regard the placement session as attended, this will be reported accurately to the commissioning school/local authority. The commissioning school remains responsible for statutory register coding.
- 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 where legislation, statutory guidance, commissioning requirements or Strive's operating arrangements change.

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

15. Policy Update Summary

Update Area	Change	Reason
Attendance guidance	Updated to Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026	Current statutory guidance
Safeguarding	Updated to KCSIE 2026 and Working Together 2026	Current statutory guidance
AP responsibilities	Clarified Strive records attendance while commissioners retain statutory register/coding/enforcement duties	Accuracy for commissioned AP
Information sharing	Strengthened prompt sharing of absence and safeguarding concerns	Safeguarding and

		commissioning practice
Language and roles	Updated Head of Operations terminology and AP-appropriate wording	Current Strive structure

Version: 2026.1 | Reviewed: October 2026 | Approved by: Directors of Strive Alternative Provision

END OF POLICY