



## Education - Attendance

### POLICY

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Policy Author         | Laura Dickie, Head of Policy<br>Tonia Lewis, Education and Quality Improvement Lead |
| Approval Date         | Feb 2026  |
| Policy Approver       | Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director                                |
| Next Review Date      | Feb 2029  |
| Version No.           | 001   |
| Policy Level          | Education   |
| Staff groups affected | All Education   |

### Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the service's established governance and quality assurance systems. Responsibility for ensuring that the policy remains compliant with legislation and regulatory frameworks sits with the Proprietor Representative and Regional Lead.

A formal review of this policy will be undertaken no later than three years from the date of approval, or sooner if changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or operational requirements necessitate it.

The Head of Policy will support this process by identifying relevant changes in legislation, regulation, national standards and emerging best practice. The Head of Policy will also incorporate learning from inspections, audits and practice developments into future revisions whilst overseeing all proposed amendments to the universal content to ensure accuracy, consistency and compliance.

**Alison Lewis April 2026**

**Interim Head Teacher**

**Andrew Sutherland/Rob McConomy**

**(Proprietor Representative/Regional Lead)**



## Terminology

Our aim is to use consistent terminology throughout this policy and all supporting documentation as follows:

| Term                             | Definition   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>'Establishment' or 'Site'</b> | A generic term referring to the school/college owned by CareTech.  |
| <b>Learner</b>                   | Any child or young person under the age of 18, or young adult over 18 who receives education.  |
| <b>Service Head</b>              | The senior person with overall responsibility for the school/college.  |
| <b>Tutor/Teacher</b>             | Members of staff who have teaching responsibility for learners at the school/college.  |
| <b>Parent/Carer</b>              | Parent or person with parental responsibility.   |
| <b>Regulatory Authority</b>      | The independent regulatory body responsible for inspecting and regulating services (e.g., Ofsted, Estyn, Education Scotland).              |
| <b>Social Worker</b>             | The worker allocated to the individual learner; if none is allocated, the Duty Social Worker or Team Manager is responsible.               |
| <b>Placing Authority</b>         | The local authority/agency responsible for placing the learner or commissioning the service.   |
| <b>Local Authority</b>           | The local authority for the establishment's location.  |
| <b>Staff</b>                     | All staff working at the location, including employed staff, students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and proprietors. |



## 1. Local School/College Profile

Cambian Oakwood School is an independent specialist day school providing education for children and young people aged 5–16 with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. The school operates within the Cambian Group. Oakwood School serves a small, highly specialised cohort of learners who typically present with complex SEMH needs, often alongside attachment difficulties, autism spectrum conditions, a history of trauma, and challenging behaviour. Many pupils have experienced significant disruption to their education, including placement breakdowns and negative prior experiences of schooling. Most learners are placed through Local Authorities, and the majority have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The school's ethos is shaped by our core values of Engage, Empower, Aspire, Achieve and Excel, with a clear moral purpose to help every learner reach their personal best, however that may be defined for them. Oakwood's vision is to raise confidence and self-esteem through inspiring, personalised learning experiences, enabling pupils to develop resilience, independence and ambition, and to make a positive contribution to their communities

Cambian Oakwood School provides a specialist, child-centred learning environment for pupils who have previously struggled to access education. Through high expectations, compassionate practice and a commitment to inclusion, the school supports learners to rebuild their confidence, re-engage with learning and progress academically, socially and emotionally at a pace that is right for them.

## 2. Purpose

This policy applies to Cambian Oakwood School *and* sets consistent standards and practical steps that can remove barriers early, respond the same day when patterns change, and keep Learners safe. It gives teachers/tutors, senior leaders and colleagues a clear practice framework, and gives Learners and families/carers clarity about expectations and support.

This policy provides assurance that we meet our statutory and regulatory obligations, protect Learners through strong safeguarding, handle data lawfully, and maintain high-quality provision

## 3. Scope

This organisational policy applies across all education sites, services and functions. It establishes the universal standards and expectations that must be followed consistently throughout the organisation.

Each site implements these standards in accordance with the statutory and regulatory requirements of the nation in which it operates as set out in **Appendix A-C**.

## 4. Local Adaptation Requirement

Some sections in this policy are marked **Adapt Locally** and must be completed by each site to reflect local procedures/processes and nation-specific equivalents (e.g., safeguarding framework; inspection remit; curriculum/quality framework;



data-protection contacts; local multi-agency pathways; escalation routes; role titles and responsibilities; and official site URLs/mailboxes/phone numbers)

Local additions must be accurate, current, aligned to national legislation and regulator guidance, and fully consistent with the universal standards in this policy.

Where no local adaptation or local equivalent is required, the universal content remains fully applicable.

## 5. Legal and Regulatory Context (Universal)

**Cambian Oakwood School** is governed by the statutory duties, safeguarding requirements and inspection arrangements of the nation in which it operates. The universal standards in this policy are implemented in line with the correct national frameworks set out in **Appendices A–C**, which summarise the legal, regulatory and inspection requirements for England, Wales and Scotland.

## 6. Policy Statement

We expect Learners to be in, **on time, and ready to learn**. We recognise that life happens—so we act quickly, kindly and proportionately to understand the reason, remove barriers, and re-engage Learners. We will:

- act on absence and lateness **the same day** through a simple first-day response;
- use **support before sanction**, escalating only when help has been tried and recorded;
- apply **reasonable adjustments** where appropriate; and
- keep a clear, lawful record of decisions and impact.

**Equality and inclusion:** We make decisions with due regard to equality and reasonable-adjustments duties (Equality Act 2010). Sites keep a short log of what was considered, what was agreed, and what difference it made.

## 7. Definitions (Operating)

To keep everyone aligned, we use the following practical definitions:

- **Session:** Any timetabled period of learning (lesson, tutorial, workshop, supervised study or scheduled activity).
- **Present:** The Learner is engaged in the timetabled session (including authorised remote or approved off-site learning).
- **Authorised / Unauthorised absence:** Recorded using the national register code set .
- **Late (before/after register closes):** Recorded using national codes and **site** cut-off times .
- **Persistent Absence (PA): Site-defined** attendance at/under an agreed threshold over a defined period .
- **Severe Absence (SA): Site-defined** very low attendance .



- **Reduced/part-time timetable:** A **time-limited**, planned inclusion adjustment, agreed and reviewed .

## 8. Standards and Expectations

Our culture is deliberately simple: **arrive, engage, communicate early if there's a barrier**. We match that with quick, proportionate support.

### 8.1 Learners

- Attend every session and arrive on time with the right equipment.
- Tell your Teacher or the site contact quickly if a barrier is making attendance difficult.

### 8.2 Parents/Carers (where applicable)

- Report absence **before** the first session through the site's agreed channel.
- Provide evidence when requested and work with us on any support plan.

### 8.3 The staff team

- Take an accurate register once in the morning and once in the afternoon session.
- The School Administrator completes the register at the start of both the morning and after session.
- Follow the same-day first day response procedures and record all actions on the school's behaviour watch in line with attendance and safeguarding expectations.
- Escalate emerging patterns early to the Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure timely intervention

### 8.4 Site Administrator/The Head Teacher

- Oversee daily monitoring, thresholds and escalation; coordinate multi-agency actions.
- Report KPIs and risk to the rest of SLT and Regional Lead, Governance board as appropriate.
- Resource, train and oversee attendance practice; review impact termly and present assurance to governance/board.
- The Headteacher is responsible for resourcing, training, and oversight of attendance practice across the school.
- Reviews attendance impact termly through SLT and governance processes, ensuring appropriate challenge, support, and continuous improvement.
- Provides assurance on attendance, inclusion, and safeguarding through termly reporting to the Director of Education (Day Schools)

## 9. Registration, Coding and First-Day Response

Registers safeguard Learners and inform teaching. We keep the process tight and humane.



### 9.1 Registers (every session)

- **Morning (AM)**
  - 9:00am – 9:15am:** Learners are recorded as **present**
  - 9:15am – 9:30am:** Learners are recorded as **late before register closes**
  - After 9:30am:** Learners are recorded as **late after register closes**
- **Afternoon (PM)**
  - 1:00pm – 1:15pm:** Learners are recorded as **present**
  - 1:15pm – 1:20pm:** Learners are recorded as **late before register closes**
  - From 1:20pm onwards:** Learners are recorded as **late after register closes.**
- Use the correct national register code set by the DFE.

### 9.2 First-day response – The Administrator (and the interim Head Teacher in her absence)

- **Check** the register and attempt same-day contact through the agreed channel(s).
- **Escalate** immediately if contact fails or risk indicators are present
- **Record** actions and outcomes on the Behaviour Watch

### 9.3 Ongoing absence and return

- After a site-defined period of absence, complete a brief Return to Learning (RTL) check-in, adapted to local processes and context. This should reflect:
  - The setting (e.g. timetable structure, staffing, safeguarding procedures)
  - Learner needs, including any known vulnerabilities or support plans
  - Available on-site resources (pastoral teams, SEND support, tutors, etc.)

The check-in should explore:

- What has happened during the absence
- What support is needed
- What the agreed plan moving forward will be
- Confirm any reasonable adjustments, outlining what is feasible within local provision (e.g. phased return, timetable adjustments, targeted interventions). Agree a catch-up plan based on curriculum delivery at that site and set a review date.
- Monitor the impact of the support put in place through local tracking systems and staff feedback, and adjust the plan as needed.

### 9.4 Absence categories: everyday, PA and SA

- Everyday authorised and unauthorised absence is recorded using national attendance codes.
- **Persistent Absence (PA):**  
A learner is identified as persistently absent when their attendance falls below 90% over a defined period. This indicates a pattern of absence that requires targeted support.
- **Severe Absence (SA):**  
A learner is identified as severely absent when their attendance falls below 50%, indicating significant disengagement and the need for intensive support and intervention.



## 10. Lateness (AM/PM) Adapt Locally

Punctuality is about respect for learning and for each other's time. We respond to lateness with calm consistency and a focus on re-engagement.

**How we record and respond:**

- **Morning (AM)**
  - 9:00am – 9:15am:** Learners are recorded as **present**
  - 9:15am – 9:30am:** Learners are recorded as **late before register closes**
  - After 9:30am:** Learners are recorded as **late after register closes**
- **Afternoon (PM)**
  - 1:00pm – 1:15pm:** Learners are recorded as **present**
  - 1:15pm – 1:20pm:** Learners are recorded as **late before register closes**
  - From 1:20pm onwards:** Learners are recorded as **late after register closes**.
- Use the correct national register code set by the DFE.

**Follow-up expectation:** repeated lateness prompts a supportive conversation, quick home contact (where applicable), and simple actions (e.g., earlier transport routine, start-of-day check-in). Escalation is used only if support does not resolve the pattern.

## 11. Absence, Persistent Absence (PA) and Severe Absence (SA): Support & Intervention

Our stance is support first, quickly, and proportionately. We match responses to the barrier, not just the percentage.

### 11.1 Triggers

#### **Everyday Absence:**

3 days (6 sessions) of absence within a 2-week period → supportive conversation with family; simple actions agreed; short review date.

#### **Persistent Absence (PA):**

Attendance at or below 90% → pastoral meeting; needs review; reasonable adjustments;

Attendance Support Plan (targets, actions, named leads, review date); consider multi-agency team involvement where appropriate.

#### **Severe Absence (SA):**

Attendance at or below 50% → senior-led case meeting; safeguarding check; time-bound re-engagement package; frequent reviews; consider statutory/legal routes alongside support in line with national and local processes where appropriate.

### 11.2 What we do to support better attendance

We keep a short list of active strategies and choose deliberately—one Learner, one plan:

- **Teaching & learning:** curriculum adaptation; sequencing tweaks; supported study; accessible resources; catch-up content structure.
- **Pastoral & practical:** key-adult check-ins; start-of-day club; uniform/kit support; travel planning; breakfast provision.



- **Academic support:** catch-up clinics; small-group support; reasonable assessment flexibility within policy.
- **Health & wellbeing:** counselling referral; nurse/health liaison; anxiety-aware arrivals; safe-space starts.
- **Inclusion-specific:** reasonable adjustments; assistive technology; phased reintegration (time-limited)
- **Family partnership:** structured home communication; Early Help/family support referral; practical problem-solving .
- **Multi-agency:** coordinated plan where thresholds are met .

## 12. Sick and Unwell Learners

We balance two things: protecting health and minimising learning loss. If a Learner is unwell, we keep them—and others—safe; when they are well enough, we help them return with confidence.

### 12.1 Reporting illness

- Parent/carer reports illness before the first session using the agreed channel and gives the expected duration .
- For extended or recurrent illness, proportionate medical evidence may be requested .

### 12.2 Becoming unwell on site

- Learner goes to the designated point (e.g., medical room) .
- First aid is provided as required; we contact parent/carer.
- We update the register code and record the outcome .

### 12.3 Contagious conditions and return

- We follow national/public-health advice on exclusion/return periods .
- On return, Teachers arrange catch-up; where needed, a short, time-limited reintegration plan is agreed and reviewed .

### 12.4 Long-term or serious health needs

- We coordinate with health professionals and the multi-agency team to agree reasonable adjustments, consider remote learning (where appropriate), and manage exam access arrangements.
- Plans are reviewed regularly and always centre the Learner's voice.

## 13. Safeguarding

Unexplained absence, repeated lateness, sudden drops in attendance, illness patterns, or inability to contact home are treated as potential safeguarding indicators. Sites take same-day action, escalate risk promptly through internal and external routes as required, and keep accurate, auditable records. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis in line with data-protection requirements. Vulnerable learners receive heightened oversight, with termly reporting to senior leaders.

*See our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for the full pathway.*



- Same-day response window: e.g. all first-day absence contact completed by 10:30am
- Contact channels used: e.g. phone, email, home visits where appropriate
- Internal escalation: concerns passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL where thresholds are met
- External referral route: referrals to Local Authority / MASH (or national equivalent) during working hours and out-of-hours service when required
- System of record: e.g. [behaviour watch], with access restricted to appropriate staff on a need-to-know basis
- Data protection: handled in line with the Privacy Notice and record retention policy
- Vulnerable cohorts: e.g. safeguarding, SEND, CLA, EBSA; monitored more frequently (e.g. weekly/half-termly reviews)
- Governance reporting: attendance and safeguarding themes reported to Regional Education Lead and Director of Education, Termly

#### **14. Inclusion, Reasonable Adjustments and Support**

Attendance support reflects individual need. We apply a graduated approach and consider, where appropriate, implementing reasonable adjustments. Adjustments are reviewed regularly to ensure they are working.

#### **15. Data, Reporting and Privacy**

We value accuracy and proportionality. Sites keep clean registers, contact logs, escalation records and outcomes. Attendance data is processed lawfully and transparently; privacy notices and retention schedules are published. Any statutory returns and local authority submissions are completed to timetable.

*See our Records Management Policy for the full pathway.*

#### **16. Monitoring, KPIs and Assurance**

Leaders review attendance at least termly (and more frequently if risk indicates). We track:

- overall attendance % and trend;
- Persistent Absence rate ;
- Severe Absence rate ;
- unauthorised absence %;
- punctuality (late before/after register closes);
- subgroup analysis (e.g., SEND, disadvantage, care-experienced, young carers, EAL, medical needs);
- timeliness and impact of interventions; and
- safeguarding referrals arising from attendance.



Findings inform our improvement plan and governance/board reporting. Inspection conversations focus on culture, systems and impact; this section provides the evidence trail.

## 18. Roles and Responsibilities (Summary)

Everyone has a part to play; clarity prevents drift.

**Learners** — Attend; be on time; engage with agreed support.

**Parents/Carers (where applicable)** — Report absence promptly; provide evidence when requested.

**Teachers/tutors** — Take registers; act on first-day response; escalate patterns; implement support; record actions.

**Attendance Lead** — Run daily operations, thresholds and analytics; coordinate multi-agency help; report KPIs.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead** - Ensure attendance concerns link with safeguarding promptly.

**Interim Headteacher/Principal** — Resource and oversee strategy; ensure compliance; present termly assurance to governance/board.

**Governance/Board** — Scrutinise performance and equity; hold leaders to account for delivery.

## 19. Training and Communication

We set everyone up for success. Induction covers register accuracy, first-day response, escalation and inclusion adjustments. Annual refreshers are provided; specialist training for Attendance Leads and pastoral teams is scheduled. Sites publish attendance expectations and contact routes clearly for Learners and families.

## 20. Related Policies

- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Behaviour, Relationships
- Anti-Bullying
- Inclusion
- Accessibility Plan / Strategy
- Curriculum & Teaching and Learning
- Assessment & Feedback
- Data Protection (GDPR) & Information Governance
- Educational Visits
- Risk Assessment and Risk Care Management
- Complaints
- Records Management

## Equality Impact Statement

This policy has been developed to promote equality, safeguard individual's rights, and ensure fair and inclusive practice across all services. The potential impact of the policy on children, young people, young adults, families, and staff with protected characteristics has been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010.



No negative impacts have been identified. Staff must apply this policy with sensitivity to individual need and make reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable access, safety, wellbeing, and participation for every individual. Any emerging risks of differential impact should be reported and addressed through ongoing review and quality assurance

## Appendices

Appendix A – Legal and Regulatory Framework in England

### Appendix A – England

Legislation, guidance and regulatory frameworks underpinning attendance in England

#### **Working together to improve school attendance (2024) — DfE statutory guidance**

- **Means:** Statutory guidance for sites (including FE sites where relevant) setting roles, processes, thresholds and legal routes to improve attendance.
- **Requires:** A clear policy, accurate registers, same-day follow-up, analysis of persistent/severe absence, targeted support with LA partnership, and proportionate legal intervention; inspectors expect evidence of impact.
- **Our stance:** We run a whole-site attendance system with support-first escalation and auditable records.
- **Implementation example:** Live dashboard tracking PA/SA with first-day response logs and case reviews to governance.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

#### **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (2025)**

- **Means:** Statutory safeguarding guidance for sites (including FE sites where relevant) setting out the duties to safeguard and promote welfare.
- **Requires:** Same-day response to unexplained absence, immediate escalation of concerns to children's services, accurate record-keeping, and clear DSL oversight. Attendance patterns (including absence and missing-from-education) must be treated as potential safeguarding indicators.
- **Our stance:** We treat absence patterns as safeguarding triggers and ensure attendance–safeguarding pathways are integrated and auditable.
- **Implementation example:** DSL reviews daily absence report; high-risk cases escalated to children's services with logs stored on the safeguarding system.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

#### **Education Inspection Framework (EIF) (2025) — Ofsted**

- **Means:** Framework for inspection of sites (including FE sites); evaluates behaviour/attitudes, personal development, leadership/management with attendance as a core indicator.



- **Requires:** Culture and systems that secure high attendance, effective follow-up and leaders' oversight of vulnerable groups; evidence must show **notice** → **action** → **difference**.
- **Our stance:** We align attendance KPIs to EIF evaluation areas and maintain a concise inspection evidence pack.
- **Implementation example:** Termly board report summarising trends, cohorts at risk, actions taken and impact.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework/education-inspection-framework-for-use-from-november-2025>

### Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014) — England

- **Means:** Legal standards for independent sites covering welfare/health/safety (Part 3), information (Part 6) and leadership/management (Part 8) relevant to attendance arrangements.
- **Requires:** Robust attendance systems, transparent information for families/authorities, and effective proprietor oversight.
- **Our stance:** Independent Schools map attendance controls to Parts 3/6/8 and assure compliance termly.
- **Implementation example:** ISS compliance log with evidence links (policy, register audits, communications, escalation records).
- **Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283>