

Education - Attendance

POLICY

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Policy Approver	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
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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.



September 2026

Tawanda Madhlangobe
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Terminology

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

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

1. Local School/College Profile

Cambian Wisbech School is an independent Department for Education registered coeducational specialist day school in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. The school operates as one school across two sites: Sessions House, 32 Somers Road, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE13 1JF and Anglia Way, 3 Anglia Way, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE13 2TY. The school provides education for pupils aged 7 to 17. Sessions House primarily supports primary age pupils and Anglia Way primarily supports secondary age pupils. All pupils have Education, Health and Care Plans and have social, emotional and mental health needs with associated special educational needs and disabilities. Many pupils have experienced disruption, school refusal or previous placement breakdown and require a personalised, relational and trauma responsive approach to re engagement with education. The school values are Aspire, Achieve, Engage, Empower and Excel. Core expectations are Ready, Respectful and Safe and the school works across both sites under the shared commitment Together Towards Excellence.

2. Purpose

This policy applies to Cambian Wisbech School across Sessions House and Anglia Way and sets consistent standards and practical steps that remove barriers early, respond on the same day when attendance changes and keep pupils safe. It gives teachers, support staff and leaders a clear practice framework and gives pupils and families clarity about expectations, support and escalation.

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**.

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 Wisbech School is governed by the statutory duties, safeguarding requirements and inspection arrangements that apply to independent schools in England. Attendance practice follows the England framework in Appendix A, the national attendance code set and the school safeguarding, special educational needs, equality and data protection arrangements.

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: The school considers reasonable adjustments whenever disability, special educational needs, mental health, medical need, transport or other barriers affect attendance. Agreed adjustments and their impact are recorded through the relevant Education, Health and Care Plan provision, Attendance Support Plan, individual plan, risk assessment or school record and are reviewed for effectiveness.

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):** a pupil is persistently absent when 10 percent or more of possible school sessions are missed. The school provides support before this threshold where patterns or barriers are emerging.
- **Severe Absence (SA):** a pupil is severely absent when 50 percent or more of possible school sessions are missed. These cases receive intensive senior leadership, safeguarding and multi agency oversight.

- **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 Tutor/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 Teachers/tutors and the staff team

- Take an accurate register **every session**.
- Follow the same day first day response for every unexplained absence. Site staff check the register, confirm any known transport or off site arrangements and contact the parent or carer promptly. Actions are recorded on the school management information system and safeguarding linked concerns are recorded on Behaviour Watch.
- Escalate emerging patterns to the relevant Assistant Headteacher, the Pastoral Manager and the safeguarding team where appropriate. The school does not wait for a pupil to reach a persistent absence threshold before offering support.

8.4 Attendance Lead

- Oversee daily monitoring, thresholds and escalation; coordinate multi-agency actions.
- The Pastoral Manager provides whole school attendance monitoring and quality assurance. Assistant Headteachers hold day to day site oversight and the Headteacher retains overall accountability. Attendance trends, persistent and severe absence, safeguarding links and intervention impact are reviewed by senior leaders and reported through regional and proprietor governance.

8.5 Headteacher/Principal

- Resource, train and oversee attendance practice; review impact termly and present assurance to governance/board.

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)

- Registers are taken for all timetabled learning, including off-site/work-based/remote where applicable.

- Use the current national attendance code set for England. Educational visits, approved off site activity, absence, lateness and other circumstances are coded according to the national rules rather than being recorded as ordinary present attendance.

9.2 First-day response

- Check the register and attempt same day contact through the agreed school channels.
- **Escalate** immediately if contact fails or risk indicators are present
- Record attendance contacts, decisions and outcomes on the school management information system. Where the information indicates a safeguarding concern, staff also record and escalate it through Behaviour Watch in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

9.3 Ongoing absence and return

- A Return to Learning check in is completed after three consecutive school days of absence, after repeated absence or sooner where the reason for absence or the pupil's vulnerability indicates that support is needed. The check identifies what happened, what support is required and the review date.
- Confirm any reasonable adjustments, catch-up, and a review date—then monitor impact.

9.4 Absence categories: everyday, PA and SA

- Everyday authorised and unauthorised absence is recorded using the current national attendance codes for England. Staff record the factual reason and do not change a code simply to improve attendance data.
- Cambian Wisbech School uses the current national definitions of persistent absence and severe absence in force in England. The school intervenes before these thresholds where a pattern, sudden decline or safeguarding concern is emerging and reviews the definitions whenever Department for Education guidance changes.

10. Lateness (AM/PM)

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:

- **Late — before register closes:** Code as late.
- **Late — after register closes:** Code as late after close.
- Register opening and closing times are the published times configured for each site in the school management information system and are reviewed annually by the Headteacher. Staff apply the national late codes according to whether the pupil arrives before or after the relevant register closes.
 - Morning registration: closes at 09.30
 - Afternoon registration: closes at 13.30

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:** any unexplained absence, repeated absence, sudden reduction or emerging pattern prompts a supportive conversation, family contact and a short review point. The response is proportionate to the pupil's needs and risk.
- **Persistent absence:** when a pupil has missed 10 percent or more of possible sessions, or is clearly moving towards this level, the school holds an Attendance Review Meeting, reviews barriers and reasonable adjustments and agrees an Attendance Support Plan with named actions and review dates. Multi agency involvement is considered where appropriate.
- **Severe absence:** when a pupil has missed 50 percent or more of possible sessions, or attendance presents equivalent concern, a senior leader chairs a case review with an immediate safeguarding check, a time limited re engagement plan and frequent review. Local authority, health, social care or other statutory routes are used where appropriate alongside support.

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 and practical:** named adult check ins, supported arrival, predictable routines, transport liaison, family communication, recognition of improved attendance and practical problem solving.
- **Academic support:** catch-up clinics; small-group support; reasonable assessment flexibility within policy.
- **Health and wellbeing:** mental health and wellbeing support, anxiety aware arrival, safe regulation spaces, Individual Healthcare Plans where needed and liaison with health professionals.
- **Inclusion-specific:** reasonable adjustments; assistive technology; phased reintegration (time-limited)
- **Family partnership:** structured contact, Attendance Review Meetings, agreed support actions and Early Help or other family support referral where appropriate.
- **Multi-agency:** coordinated plan where thresholds are met .
- **Evidence rule:** each strategy has a start date, responsible person, review date, and a short impact note (attendance %, punctuality, and learning progress).

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

- Parents or carers report illness to the school office or agreed site contact before the first session and provide the expected duration where known. Recurrent or extended illness is reviewed with the family and proportionate medical information may be requested when needed to plan support.

12.2 Becoming unwell on site

- A pupil who becomes unwell is supported by a trained member of staff at the relevant site. First aid is provided where required and the parent or carer is contacted. The register is updated accurately and any safeguarding or medical concern is escalated without delay.

12.3 Contagious conditions and return

- The school follows current national public health advice on exclusion and return. On return, teachers arrange proportionate catch up and leaders agree a short reintegration plan where absence has been prolonged or has affected engagement.

12.4 Long-term or serious health needs

- For long term or serious health needs the school coordinates with parents or carers, health professionals, the special educational needs team and other relevant agencies. Reasonable adjustments, an Individual Healthcare Plan, a temporary reintegration plan or remote learning are considered where appropriate and reviewed regularly with the pupil's voice central to decision making.

13. Safeguarding

Unexplained absence, repeated lateness, sudden drops in attendance, illness patterns or inability to contact home are treated as potential safeguarding indicators. Same day action is required and risk is escalated through the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. Pupils requiring heightened oversight include pupils subject to child protection or child in need processes, looked after or care experienced pupils, pupils with a social worker, pupils at risk of exploitation or going missing, pupils with significant mental health or medical needs, pupils with severe absence and any pupil whose individual circumstances indicate increased vulnerability. Attendance and safeguarding information is reviewed together so that patterns are not considered in isolation.

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

Local attendance safeguarding arrangements:

Same day response window: unexplained absence is acted on as soon as it is identified and normally within 30 minutes of the relevant register closing.

- Contact channels: telephone, text message, email or other agreed family contact route through the school office or site team. Transport providers are contacted where a transport issue may explain absence.

- Internal escalation: no response, conflicting information, repeated absence or any risk indicator is escalated immediately to the relevant Assistant Headteacher and to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. Safeguarding concerns are recorded on Behaviour Watch.
- Out of hours: Cambian Wisbech School is a day provision and does not operate a routine education attendance service outside school hours. Where information indicates immediate danger outside school hours, emergency services or the relevant social care emergency duty service are contacted in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- External referral route: referrals are made through the current Cambridgeshire County Council children's social care, early help, children missing education and other attendance pathways as appropriate. Where there is immediate danger, emergency services are contacted.
- System of record and access: attendance is recorded on the school management information system. Safeguarding related attendance concerns are also recorded on Behaviour Watch. Access is restricted to authorised staff according to role and need to know.
- Privacy and retention: attendance information is handled in accordance with CareTech and school privacy notices, the Records Management Policy and applicable retention requirements.
- Heightened oversight: vulnerable pupils identified above are reviewed at least weekly by attendance and safeguarding leads and more frequently where risk or a sudden change in attendance requires it.
- Governance reporting: the Pastoral Manager provides attendance monitoring and quality assurance information to the Headteacher. The Headteacher reports attendance trends, persistent and severe absence, safeguarding links and intervention impact through regional and proprietor governance at least termly and escalates significant risks sooner.

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. FE and Post-16 Provisions

Where a pupil follows post 16, off site, work related or alternative provision, attendance is recorded for each agreed session and verified through the school's agreed provider communication process. The school remains responsible for checking unexplained non-attendance and for accurate national coding. Provider information is reconciled with school records and safeguarding concerns are escalated on the same day.

16. 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.

17. 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 arrangements: the Pastoral Manager provides whole school attendance monitoring and quality assurance while Assistant Headteachers oversee day to day site attendance. The Headteacher retains overall accountability.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Tawanda Madhlangobe, Headteacher. Ensures attendance concerns link with safeguarding promptly, supported by trained Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads across both sites.

Headteacher: Tawanda Madhlangobe. Resources and oversees attendance strategy, ensures compliance and presents termly assurance to regional and proprietor governance.

Regional and proprietor governance scrutinise attendance performance, safeguarding links, equity and the impact of support and hold school 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>