Education - Attendance

POLICY

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

ASalisbury

Abigail Salisbury-Headteacher

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

Devon School is an independent specialist provision for students aged 10 to 16 with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. We provide a nurturing and supportive environment where students can access learning that is tailored to their individual needs. Our approach focuses not only on academic progress, but also on helping every student develop confidence, self-esteem, resilience and positive relationships. At Devon School, we believe that every young person deserves the opportunity to succeed and to discover their strengths in a safe and compassionate learning community.

At Devon School, our vision is to collaborate with students and families to create a respectful and compassionate school community. We aim to foster a lifelong love of learning, empowering everyone to become the best versions of themselves.

Our school community is guided by five core values that shape everything we do:

- *Respect*
- *Honesty*
- *Responsibility*
- *Resilience*
- *Kindness*

These values help us create a positive environment where students feel safe, valued and supported to grow.

2. Purpose

This policy applies to **Devon 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)

Devon 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 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 and log actions on the MIS: Behaviour Watch
- Escalate emerging patterns early to the Attendance Lead: Samantha Carrington and safeguarding lead: Claire Benjafield

8.4 Attendance Lead

- Oversee daily monitoring, thresholds and escalation; coordinate multi-agency actions.
- Report KPIs and risk to the Headteacher and governance board.

8.5 Headteacher

- 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)

- **Morning (AM)**

9:00am – 9:15am: Learners are recorded as present
9:15am – Learners are recorded as late

- **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

- **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 MIS

9.3 Ongoing absence and return

After a **site-defined** duration, complete a brief **Return to Learning** check-in:
This should reflect:

- The school environment-timetable, staffing, peer interactions
- Learner voice, including any known vulnerabilities or support plans
- Available on-site resources (pastoral teams, SEND support, key workers)

The check-in should explore:

- What has contributed to or caused the absence
- What support is needed to successfully re-integrate into school
- What the agreed plan moving forward will be and what support will be implemented (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.
- Confirm any a review date—then monitor impact.

9.4 Absence categories: everyday, PA and SA

- Everyday authorised/unauthorised absence is recorded using national 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:

- **Late — before register closes:** Code as late.
- **Late — after register closes:** Code as late after close.
- **Local cut-off times to be inserted by the site:**
- **Morning (AM)**

9:00am – 9:15am: Learners are recorded as present
9:15am - Learners are recorded as late

- **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.

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:** at/under 95%→ supportive conversation with family; simple actions agreed; short review date.
- **Persistent Absence (PA):** at/under 90%→ pastoral meeting; needs review; reasonable adjustments;
- **Attendance Support Plan** (targets, actions, named leads, review date); consider multi agency team involvement.
- **Severe Absence (SA):** at/under 50% → senior-led case meeting; safeguarding check; time-bound re-engagement package; frequent reviews; consider statutory/legal routes alongside support and in line with national/local processes.

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 sessions; 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 .
- **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

- Parent/carer (or FE Learner) 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., student services/medical room) .
- First aid is provided; we contact parent/carer or follow FE self-dismissal rules .
- 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, Tutors/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 (contact made with family by 10.30)
- Contact channels used (phone call, email or home visit if appropriate)
- Internal escalation to DSL or DDSL when required
- External referral route to LA and/or MASH where required
- System of record: 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. FE and Post-16 Provisions

In post-16, attendance is recorded per session/module. Off-site/placement attendance is captured via the agreed mechanism. For apprenticeships/industry placements, providers and employers follow agreed absence-reporting timelines . If bursary or financial support is attendance-linked, sites publish criteria and appeals .

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 — Run daily operations, thresholds and analytics; coordinate multi-agency help; report KPIs.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (title) - Ensure attendance concerns link with safeguarding promptly.
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 B – Legal and Regulatory Framework in Wales

Appendix C – Legal and Regulatory Framework in Scotland

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) (2026)

- **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

Appendix B — Wales

Legislation, guidance and regulatory frameworks underpinning attendance in England
School attendance and absence (hub) — Welsh Government

- **Means:** Official hub for sites (including FE sites where relevant) bringing together national attendance guidance, codes, templates and the All-Wales framework.
- **Requires:** Clear procedures, accurate registers, analysis and targeted support; collaboration with the Education Welfare Service and proportionate use of formal measures.
- **Our stance:** Sites adopt the hub guidance and local authority processes; EWS partnership is embedded in escalation.
- **Implementation example:** Site procedure aligned to LA/EWS with code use, PA/SA thresholds, and meeting minutes stored centrally.
- **Links:** https://www.gov.wales/school-attendance-and-absence

Keeping Learners Safe (2022) — Welsh Government statutory guidance

- **Means:** Statutory safeguarding guidance for all education settings in Wales, including **sites (including FE sites where relevant)**. Defines safeguarding duties under the Education Act 2002 and Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- **Requires:** Early identification of concerns, same-day action on unexplained absence, accurate records, and appropriate multi-agency escalation. Guidance emphasises schools' and FE settings' role in identifying risk through attendance patterns.
- **Our stance:** Absence, lateness and sudden pattern changes are treated as safeguarding triggers and checked against local pathways.
- **Implementation example:** Site safeguarding lead receives daily absence alerts, records actions on the safeguarding system, and liaises with LA/EWS where risk indicators appear.
- **Links:** https://www.gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe

Estyn — Inspection guidance (2024–26)

- **Means:** National inspection handbooks for sites setting expectations for wellbeing, care, support and guidance, including attendance practice.
- **Requires:** Evidence of systematic follow-up, support for vulnerable groups, and leadership oversight with demonstrable impact.
- **Our stance:** Attendance self-evaluation maps to Estyn areas; evidence packs show processes working and outcomes improving.
- **Implementation example:** Pre-inspection summary covering trends, cohort analysis, intervention impact and EWS collaboration.
- **Links:** https://estyn.gov.wales/inspection-guidance-resources/

Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations (2024) *(independent sites only)*

- **Means:** Standards for independent sites in Wales covering quality of education, welfare/health/safety, premises, information and leadership—relevant to attendance systems and reporting.
- **Requires:** Proprietor accountability for compliant processes, transparent information for families/LAs, and safeguarding-aligned practice.
- **Our stance:** Independent Schools maintain a standards-to-evidence map for attendance arrangements and review it termly.
- **Implementation example:** Proprietor report evidencing register accuracy audits, parental communications and escalation outcomes.
- **Links:** https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2024/27/made

Appendix C — Scotland

Legislation, guidance and regulatory frameworks underpinning attendance in Scotland

Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: Promoting and managing school attendance (2019)

- **Means:** National guidance for education authorities and sites on promoting attendance and managing absence across Scotland.
- **Requires:** Whole-site approaches, accurate recording, early intervention for patterns and partnership working with services and families.
- **Our stance:** Sites implement the Part 1 framework and record decisions, actions and impact systematically.
- **Implementation example:** Local procedure aligned to Part 1 with case tracking for PA/SA, review notes and multi-agency actions.
- **Links:** https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-1-positive-approach-promotion-management-attendance-scottish-schools/

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021, updated 2023)

- **Means:** National safeguarding guidance for all services working with children; sets expectations for responding to risk, information-sharing and multi-agency practice.
- **Requires:** Attendance changes (absence, sudden decline, repeated lateness, failure to engage) must be treated as potential child-protection indicators; sites must escalate concerns using GIRFEC pathways and inter-agency procedures.
- **Our stance:** Attendance monitoring is integrated into wellbeing assessment and Child's Plan processes; risk is escalated promptly via local child protection procedures.
- **Implementation example:** Attendance dip triggers a wellbeing assessment using the National Practice Model; actions recorded and shared with the multi-agency team.
- **Links:** https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023/documents/

GIRFEC — Getting it right for every child (updated 2023)

- **Means:** Scotland's national approach to wellbeing and coordinated support, underpinning risk-led responses to emerging attendance concerns at sites.
- **Requires:** Child-centred planning, proportionate information-sharing and multi-agency coordination where needed.
- **Our stance:** Attendance pathways use the National Practice Model and align with GIRFEC roles and processes.
- **Implementation example:** Child's-plan style record linking attendance concerns to wellbeing assessment, actions and outcomes. **Links:** https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/

How good is our school? (HGIOS4) — Self-evaluation framework (page updated 2025)

- **Means:** National self-evaluation framework used in inspection and improvement; QI 3.1 focuses on wellbeing, equality and inclusion relevant to attendance at sites.
- **Requires:** Providers to evidence inclusive culture, effective systems and measurable impact on engagement and attendance.
- **Our stance:** Sites self-evaluate attendance within HGIOS4 and feed actions into improvement planning.
- **Implementation example:** Annual HGIOS4 review note on attendance with actions, owners and progress updates for SLT/governance.
- **Links:** https://educationinspectorate.gov.scot/inspection-frameworks/hgios4/