



# **Attendance Policy**

## 1. Policy Statement

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NewHeart Learning believes that regular attendance and engagement are essential to enabling pupils to benefit fully from their placement, make educational progress and develop positive relationships, confidence and wellbeing.

As a non-school Alternative Provision, NewHeart Learning recognises that many pupils accessing the provision may have experienced significant barriers to attendance and engagement, including SEND, SEMH needs, emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA), anxiety, disrupted education or previous periods of non-attendance.

NewHeart Learning therefore adopts a supportive, relational and individualised approach to attendance. Expectations remain appropriately high while recognising individual needs, starting points and agreed placement arrangements.

NewHeart Learning records and monitors each pupil's attendance against their agreed commissioned timetable and communicates attendance information promptly to the commissioning school or local authority.

The commissioning school and/or local authority, as applicable, retains its statutory responsibilities in relation to school attendance, registration and oversight of the pupil's education.

NewHeart Learning works collaboratively with pupils, parents/carers, commissioners and relevant professionals to identify barriers to attendance, promote engagement and respond promptly to unexplained or concerning absence.

## 2. Aims

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This policy aims to:

- promote regular attendance, punctuality and sustained engagement with NewHeart Learning;
- establish clear expectations for attendance at agreed commissioned sessions;
- ensure accurate daily attendance records are maintained;
- ensure attendance and absence information is communicated promptly to commissioners;
- identify patterns of absence and barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity;
- provide appropriate individualised support to improve attendance and engagement;
- recognise the particular attendance barriers that may affect pupils with SEND, SEMH needs, EBSA and other vulnerabilities;
- work collaboratively with pupils, parents/carers, commissioning schools, local authorities and relevant professionals;
- ensure unexplained, repeated or prolonged absence is considered from a safeguarding perspective; and
- support commissioners in fulfilling their statutory attendance and safeguarding responsibilities.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

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Head of Alternative Provision / DSL

The Head of Alternative Provision will:

- have overall responsibility for NewHeart Learning's attendance arrangements;
- oversee the monitoring of attendance and engagement;
- ensure appropriate systems are in place for accurate recording and reporting;
- identify significant or emerging attendance concerns;
- ensure attendance concerns are considered within safeguarding practice;
- liaise with commissioners and relevant professionals where significant concerns arise; and
- oversee appropriate interventions and support.

Head of Business Operations / DDSL

The Head of Business Operations will:

- oversee daily attendance monitoring;
- ensure attendance information is communicated to commissioning schools or local authorities by the agreed reporting time;
- ensure unexplained absences are followed up promptly;
- maintain appropriate communication with parents/carers regarding absence;
- identify emerging patterns of absence or lateness;
- prepare attendance information and reports for commissioners as required; and
- escalate safeguarding or significant attendance concerns to the DSL.

Tutors and Support Staff

Staff will:

- accurately record pupil attendance and punctuality;
- remain alert to changes in attendance, engagement or presentation;
- promote attendance through positive relationships, consistent routines and appropriate encouragement;
- seek to understand barriers to attendance and engagement;
- record relevant information and concerns; and
- report safeguarding or significant attendance concerns promptly to the DSL/DDSL.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- support their child to attend all agreed NewHeart Learning sessions regularly and punctually;
- notify NewHeart Learning as soon as possible where their child will be absent and normally before the start of the scheduled session;
- provide relevant information regarding the reason for absence;
- maintain communication with NewHeart Learning and the commissioning school or local authority as appropriate; and
- work collaboratively with professionals to address barriers to attendance.

Pupils

Pupils will be supported and encouraged to:

- attend their agreed sessions regularly and punctually;
- engage with their learning and support;
- communicate with trusted staff about difficulties or barriers affecting their attendance; and
- contribute to plans designed to improve their attendance and engagement.

## 4. Procedures

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## **Registration**

Attendance will be recorded for every pupil expected to attend NewHeart Learning in accordance with their agreed placement timetable.

Registers will be completed promptly at the beginning of the pupil's scheduled session and maintained securely.

Attendance information will be monitored daily and shared with the commissioning school or local authority in accordance with agreed reporting arrangements.

Where a pupil is expected to attend NewHeart Learning but does not arrive, the absence will be identified and followed up promptly.

## **Reporting Absence**

Parents/carers should notify NewHeart Learning as soon as possible where their child will not be attending a scheduled session and normally before the pupil's expected arrival time.

The reason for absence will be recorded and relevant information shared with the commissioner as appropriate.

## **Unexplained Absence**

Where a pupil fails to attend an expected session and NewHeart Learning has not received an explanation, staff will follow the provision's first-day absence procedures.

This will normally include:

- checking available information regarding the pupil's expected attendance;
- attempting to contact the parent/carer;
- informing or liaising with the commissioning school or local authority;
- considering known safeguarding risks and vulnerabilities; and
- escalating concerns to the DSL/DDSL where appropriate.

Where contact cannot be established or there are concerns regarding the pupil's safety or welfare, further safeguarding action will be considered in accordance with NewHeart Learning's Safeguarding Policy and agreed arrangements with the commissioner.

## **Reasons for Absence**

NewHeart Learning will accurately record the information provided regarding a pupil's absence and communicate this to the commissioner as appropriate.

Reasons may include illness, medical appointments, religious observance, exceptional family circumstances, transport difficulties, anxiety or other barriers affecting attendance.

As NewHeart Learning is a non-school Alternative Provision, decisions relating to the statutory authorisation or coding of school absence remain the responsibility of the pupil's registered school or other responsible body, as applicable.

## **Late Arrival**

Late arrival will be recorded and monitored. Where lateness becomes repeated or begins to affect the pupil's ability to benefit from their placement, NewHeart Learning will work with the pupil, parents/carers and commissioner to understand the reasons and identify appropriate support.

## 5. Attendance Monitoring and Support

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NewHeart Learning will monitor attendance and punctuality against each pupil's agreed placement timetable.

Attendance information will be reviewed regularly to identify:

- patterns of absence or lateness;
- declining attendance or engagement;
- repeated or prolonged absence;
- changes from the pupil's usual pattern of attendance;
- barriers that may be affecting attendance; and
- any safeguarding concerns associated with absence.

Attendance will be considered in the context of the pupil's individual circumstances, needs, vulnerabilities and agreed placement objectives.

Where concerns are identified, NewHeart Learning will seek to understand the barriers affecting attendance and work collaboratively with the pupil, parents/carers, commissioner and relevant professionals to identify appropriate support.

Support may include:

- an individual Attendance Support Plan;
- increased communication and check-ins;
- review of transition arrangements;
- adjustments to routines or support strategies;
- consideration of reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND;
- support relating to anxiety, SEMH or EBSA;
- review of transport or other practical barriers;
- phased or graduated approaches to increasing engagement where appropriate; and
- multi-agency discussion or review where required.

Significant or persistent concerns will be communicated promptly to the commissioning school or local authority.

NewHeart Learning may use attendance percentages and other information to monitor engagement with the provision. Any determination of a pupil's statutory persistent absence status remains the responsibility of the pupil's registered school or relevant responsible body.

## 6. Promoting Good Attendance and Engagement

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NewHeart Learning recognises that improving attendance for pupils accessing Alternative Provision often requires an understanding of the underlying barriers to education rather than a solely punitive response.

NewHeart Learning promotes attendance and engagement through:

- positive and trusting relationships with pupils;
- a safe, welcoming and predictable learning environment;
- consistent routines and expectations;
- appropriately personalised learning;
- recognition and celebration of progress and positive engagement;
- pupil voice and involvement in planning support;
- individualised strategies to address barriers to attendance;
- reasonable adjustments where required;
- effective communication with parents/carers and commissioners; and
- appropriate transition and reintegration support.

Attendance improvement will be recognised in relation to the pupil's individual starting point. For some pupils, particularly those experiencing significant EBSA or other barriers to education, gradual improvements in attendance and engagement may represent significant progress.

## 7. Safeguarding and Absence from Education

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NewHeart Learning recognises that absence from education, particularly where it is repeated, prolonged, unexplained or represents a significant change in a pupil's usual pattern of attendance, may be an important safeguarding warning sign.

Staff will remain professionally curious about the reasons for absence and alert to circumstances in which absence or changes in engagement may indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm.

Unexplained absence from an agreed NewHeart Learning session will be followed up promptly and communicated to the commissioning school or local authority in accordance with agreed arrangements.

Where an absence gives rise to a safeguarding concern, staff will report this immediately to the DSL/DDSL and NewHeart Learning's safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include liaison with the commissioning school or local authority and relevant professionals or agencies, including children's social care or the police where appropriate.

Particular attention will be given to pupils who are known to be vulnerable or where there are repeated or prolonged periods of absence, unexplained changes in attendance or engagement, or difficulty establishing the pupil's whereabouts or welfare.

Attendance information will be considered alongside other safeguarding information so that patterns or emerging concerns can be identified.

## 8. Monitoring and Review

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The Head of Provision has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

Attendance information and procedures will be reviewed as part of NewHeart Learning's wider safeguarding and quality-assurance arrangements. This will include consideration of patterns of attendance, punctuality and absence and the effectiveness of strategies used to support engagement.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, Department for Education guidance, local authority commissioning requirements or NewHeart Learning's operating arrangements.

The policy may also be reviewed following significant safeguarding incidents, identified attendance trends or findings arising from quality assurance.

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| Date of last review: | 30 August 2026                     |
| Date to review:      | 30 August 2027                     |
| Author:              | Daniella Hart<br>Head of Provision |
| Signed:              | <i>Daniella Hart</i>               |