A blue and white logo

Description automatically generated

**Attendance Policy**

**Date:** August 2024 **Review Date:** August 2025

**Introduction:**

Stepping Stones Alternative Provision offers a bespoke curriculum offer to our students allowing them to feel part of a community, engage within their community and achieve qualifications.

We offer a bespoke curriculum that combines a focus on English, maths, sports-related qualifications and a wide range of enrichment to support our young people’s personal and social development. Outstanding attendance is crucial, enabling us to provide the best support for young people in achieving their personal goals and targets. Regular school attendance is essential if young people are to achieve their full potential.

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of our education provision, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying and behaviour. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Race Relations Act 1965 (Amendment 2000 ) and the Equality Act 2010.

**Legal Framework:**

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

* The register must record whether the student was:
* Present
* Absent
* Present at approved educational activity; or
* Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

If we do not see a pupil or hear from their parent/carer informing us of a valid reason why they are not able to attend school, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

**Responsibilities of Parents/Carers:**

Parents/carers are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents/carers fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school. Young People who attend Stepping Stones Alternative Provision are mainly referred to us using our admissions process.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend.

Parents/carers should:

* Ensure that their children arrive on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn.
* Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of regular attendance.
* Impress upon their children the need to observe Stepping Stones code of conduct and behaviour policy.
* Take an active interest in their children’s education career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending review’s and other relevant meetings.
* Work in partnership with Stepping Stones to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
* Ensure that they are aware of this attendance policy.
* Notify Stepping Stones if their child is absent. This should be done as soon as possible - preferably on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the child returns.
* Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
* Avoid booking holidays during term time.

**Responsibilities of Stepping Stones Alternative Provision:**

Stepping Stones are responsible for supporting the attendance of young people and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance. Schools are required to call attendance registers at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and to record whether young people are present, absent or on an approved educational activity. For young people of compulsory school age, schools are required to differentiate in the registers between absence that is authorised and absence that is unauthorised.

Stepping Stones will:

* Work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual young people and for the student body as a whole - as one of their key tasks
* Support parents/carers in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of young people and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
* Be sensitive to the needs of individual parents/carers and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed
* Produce education project attendance policies which are consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents/carers, young people and staff
* Ensure that legal requirements are met
* Give a high priority to attendance and punctuality
* Identify clear channels of communication with parents/carers
* Ensure that up-to-date attendance data is available
* Identify what is considered as authorised/unauthorised absence
* Make provision for first-day of absence contact
* Have clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence- Staff will call home first and then the main school or educational provider
* Prioritise the importance of early intervention
* Identify a range of strategies to deal with absenteeism
* Be sensitive to individual young people’ needs
* Establish systems for rewarding good/improved attendance
* Establish procedures for re-integrating long-term absentees
* Ensure that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness
* Ensure that good practice is identified and disseminated
* Be reviewed at regular intervals
* Make clear to parents/carers what is, and is not, acceptable as reasons for absence
* State how lateness, both before and after closure of registers, is recorded and monitored
* Make clear that leave for holidays during term time is granted only in exceptional circumstances
* Encourage all staff to see attendance as part of their responsibility
* Actively address all issues - such as bullying – which may lead to nonattendance

**Attendance**

Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases. Registers must be taken at the beginning of each session. Stepping Stones should ensure that young people can be accounted for in an emergency. Registers must record whether each young person is present or absent.

In marking registers, Stepping Stones will use the national set of symbols as required by the DfE. When the reason for a young person's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

**Absence Protocol**

If students are expected and are not present by 10.10am we will call the parent/guardian to discuss the expected outcome, whether the student will be arriving and is running late or to identify if there is a reason they will not be attending. This is then updated into our registration system. If no contact can be made, an email will be sent to the parent school or education provider explaining the situation and to discuss further options. Stepping Stones Alternative Provision then follow up contact with the school for an update regarding attendance of the pupil. It is expected that parents/guardians provide an update for attendance as stipulated within our parent contract.

If any concerns arise, we collaborate with the school or main education provider to identify the best possible outcomes for the student involved.

**ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CODE** | **DESCRIPTION** | **MEANING** |
| **/** | Present (AM) | Present |
| **\** | Present (PM) | Present |
| **B** | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| **C** | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| **E** | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| **S** | Suspended from the provision | Authorised absence |
| **G** | Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| **H** | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| **I** | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| **J** | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| **L** | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| **M** | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| **N** | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| **P** | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| **R** | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| **S** | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| **T** | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| **U** | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| **V** | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| **W** | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |