



Attendance and Engagement Policy

**The Lodge
PJ Creative Learning Ltd**

Policy Version: 1.0

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1. Purpose and Commitment

The Lodge is committed to supporting learners to attend regularly, engage meaningfully and develop positive experiences of education. We recognise that many of the young people accessing our setting have experienced barriers to attendance, including anxiety, trauma, sensory differences, emotional regulation difficulties, disrupted education and previous negative experiences within educational environments.

For many learners, attendance cannot be viewed in isolation from wellbeing. A young person who feels unsafe, overwhelmed or disconnected from learning is unlikely to engage consistently. For this reason, The Lodge adopts a supportive, relational and individualised approach to attendance and engagement.

We believe that positive attendance is built through trust, consistency, strong relationships and learning experiences that feel relevant, achievable and meaningful. Our aim is to help learners gradually rebuild confidence in education while maintaining high expectations and working closely with schools, families and other professionals.

2. Legal Framework

The Lodge provides commissioned, part time, one to one educational support for young people aged 11–18. All learners remain on roll at their referring school or continue to receive education through an appropriate commissioning arrangement.

The Lodge is not a registered school and does not hold statutory responsibility for school attendance. Responsibility for monitoring and recording statutory attendance remains with the learner's referring school or relevant local authority.

This policy has regard to:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Relevant Department for Education attendance guidance

Although statutory attendance responsibilities remain with the referring school, The Lodge recognises that attendance forms an important part of safeguarding, wellbeing and educational engagement. Accurate attendance records are therefore maintained and shared appropriately.

3. Attendance and Engagement at The Lodge

Attendance and engagement are closely linked but are not always the same thing.

Attendance refers to a learner being present for a scheduled session at The Lodge.

Engagement refers to the learner's participation in the session and may look different for different young people depending on their needs, communication style, emotional state and stage of development.

We recognise that for some learners, particularly those experiencing anxiety, trauma or emotionally based school avoidance, significant progress may initially be demonstrated through small but meaningful steps. These may include entering the building, remaining in the learning environment, communicating with a trusted adult, exploring resources or participating in activities for short periods of time.

The Lodge values these steps as important indicators of progress and understands that successful engagement often develops gradually through positive experiences and trusted relationships.

4. Referral, Placement and Session Arrangements

Learners attend The Lodge through commissioned arrangements agreed with the referring school or other appropriate commissioning organisation.

All sessions are delivered on a one to one basis and are tailored to the individual learner's needs, interests and agreed outcomes.

Attendance patterns vary according to individual circumstances and support arrangements. Session frequency, duration and timetabling are agreed in partnership with the referring school and reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet the learner's needs.

The Lodge does not provide full time education and does not operate group teaching arrangements. Learners attend for part time educational support as part of a wider educational package

5. Recording Attendance

The Lodge maintains accurate attendance records for all scheduled sessions. Attendance records support safeguarding, communication with referring schools and the monitoring of learner engagement over time.

For each scheduled session, a record is maintained of attendance, arrival and departure times where appropriate, and any relevant information relating to absence or engagement. Records are stored securely and handled in accordance with data protection requirements.

As learners remain on roll at their referring school or continue to receive education through an appropriate commissioning arrangement, attendance information may be shared with the referring school and other relevant professionals where appropriate.

Attendance records form part of the wider information used to understand a learner's progress, wellbeing and ongoing support needs.

6. Absence and Non-Attendance

Where a learner is unable to attend a scheduled session, parents, carers or the referring organisation should notify The Lodge as soon as reasonably possible.

When a learner is absent, the reason for the absence will be recorded where known. Where information is not available, reasonable attempts may be made to establish the reason and determine whether any safeguarding concerns exist.

The Lodge recognises that some learners experience periods of heightened anxiety, emotional distress, illness or other difficulties that may affect attendance. Absence is therefore considered within the wider context of the learner's circumstances and support needs.

Where patterns of absence begin to emerge, The Lodge will communicate with the referring school and, where appropriate, with parents, carers and other professionals involved in the learner's support. The aim is to understand barriers to attendance and identify appropriate strategies to support re-engagement.

Repeated absence may result in a review of the placement in partnership with the referring school or commissioning organisation to ensure that support arrangements remain appropriate and effective.

6A. Late Arrival

Learners may occasionally arrive later than their scheduled session time due to transport difficulties, medical appointments, anxiety-related barriers, family circumstances or other unforeseen events.

Where a learner is expected but has not arrived within a reasonable period, The Lodge may contact the parent, carer, transport provider or referring school, where appropriate, to establish the reason for the delay and ensure the learner's welfare.

Late arrivals will be recorded within attendance records. Repeated lateness may be discussed with the learner, family and referring school to identify any barriers and consider appropriate support strategies.

The Lodge recognises that some learners experience difficulties with transitions, anxiety or attendance-related challenges and will seek to respond in a supportive and proportionate manner.

6B. Collection, Transport and Unexpected Non-Collection

The Lodge works with parents, carers, schools and transport providers to ensure learners arrive and leave safely.

At the end of each session, learners will only be released in accordance with agreed collection arrangements. Where a learner is collected by a parent, carer or authorised adult, staff will ensure that the learner is safely handed over before leaving the setting.

Where commissioned transport is used, staff will supervise the learner until transport arrives.

If a learner is not collected as expected, reasonable attempts will be made to contact the parent, carer, transport provider and, where appropriate, the referring school. The learner will remain supervised by staff until suitable arrangements have been made.

Where there are concerns regarding a learner's welfare, safety or whereabouts, action will be taken in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

7. Attendance, Safeguarding and Welfare

Attendance forms an important part of safeguarding practice.

Changes in attendance patterns can sometimes indicate emerging concerns relating to wellbeing, mental health, family circumstances, exploitation, emotional distress or other safeguarding risks. For this reason, attendance information is considered alongside other information known about the learner.

Where The Lodge becomes concerned about a learner's safety or welfare, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will take appropriate action in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. This may include communication with the referring school, parents or carers, children's services, the police or other relevant agencies.

As all learners remain on roll elsewhere, safeguarding concerns relating to attendance are shared promptly with the referring school so that appropriate action can be considered within the wider safeguarding framework.

The welfare of the learner will always remain the primary consideration.

8. Supporting Attendance and Re-engagement

The Lodge recognises that many learners attending the setting have experienced barriers to education and may require additional support to develop consistent attendance patterns.

Our approach focuses on understanding and reducing barriers rather than applying punitive measures. We seek to build positive relationships, create a welcoming environment and provide learning experiences that are meaningful and achievable for the individual learner.

Support strategies may include gradual introductions to the setting, flexible session arrangements, consistent staffing, clear routines, emotional regulation support, sensory adjustments or other reasonable adaptations based on the learner's needs.

Where attendance becomes a concern, The Lodge will work collaboratively with the learner, family, referring school and other professionals to identify practical and realistic ways of improving engagement.

We recognise that progress may occur in small steps and that successful re-engagement often develops over time through trust, consistency and positive educational experiences.

9. Monitoring and Review

Attendance and engagement information is reviewed regularly to identify patterns, emerging concerns and areas where additional support may be required.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead maintains oversight of attendance arrangements and works with referring schools where concerns arise. Attendance information may be discussed as part of wider reviews, safeguarding discussions, progress meetings or placement reviews.

Monitoring arrangements help ensure that learners receive appropriate support and that attendance concerns are identified and addressed at an early stage.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or operational practice.

10. Links with Other Policies

This Attendance and Engagement Policy should be read alongside the following policies and procedures used at The Lodge:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Sets out the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people attending the setting.

SEND Inclusion Policy

Explains how learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are supported to access education and participate fully within the setting.

Behaviour and Risk Response Policy

Describes the approaches used to support emotional regulation, positive behaviour and learner wellbeing.

Health and Safety Policy

Details the arrangements in place to maintain a safe environment for learners, staff and visitors.

Complaints Policy

Provides information about how concerns or complaints can be raised and addressed.

Data Protection and Privacy Policy

Sets out how personal information, including attendance records, is collected, stored, shared and protected.

Together, these policies support The Lodge's commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which learners can rebuild confidence, develop positive relationships with education and experience meaningful success.

