



Attendance and Engagement Policy

The Lodge
PJ Creative Learning Ltd

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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 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. The Lodge therefore uses 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 clear expectations and working closely with schools, families and other professionals.

2. Legal Framework and Responsibilities

The Lodge provides commissioned, part time, one to one educational support for young people aged 11 to 18. 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 the statutory attendance register. Responsibility for statutory attendance, register coding, authorising absence and any formal attendance action remains with the learner's referring school or relevant local authority. The Lodge records attendance at its own commissioned sessions and supplies accurate information so that the responsible organisation can fulfil its duties.

This policy has regard to:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The SEND Code of Practice 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance, July 2026
- Children Missing Education statutory guidance 2025
- Alternative Provision statutory guidance, updated 2025
- Non school Alternative Provision Voluntary National Standards 2025

Although statutory attendance responsibility remains elsewhere, attendance at The Lodge forms an important part of safeguarding, wellbeing and educational engagement. Records will be accurate, timely and shared through the agreed reporting arrangements.

3. Attendance and Engagement at The Lodge

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

Attendance means that a learner is physically present for all or part of a scheduled session at The Lodge. Engagement describes how the learner participates. It may look different according to the learner's needs, communication, emotional state and stage of development.

A learner who is present but finds engagement difficult will still be recorded as present for the time they attended. Engagement information will be recorded separately and will not be used to alter the factual attendance record.

For some learners, particularly those experiencing anxiety, trauma or emotionally based avoidance of education, progress may initially be shown 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 for a short period.

The Lodge values these steps as indicators of progress while continuing to share the learner's actual attendance times clearly with the referring school.

4. Referral, Placement and Session Arrangements

Learners attend The Lodge through commissioned arrangements agreed with the referring school, local authority or other appropriate commissioning organisation. All sessions are delivered on a one to one basis and are tailored to the learner's needs, interests and agreed outcomes.

The agreed days, session times, start date, end date, named attendance contact, emergency contacts, transport arrangements and reporting method must be confirmed before the placement starts. Any planned changes must be agreed and recorded.

The Lodge offers no more than 12 commissioned hours for an individual learner in a week. It does not provide full time education or replace the learner's whole educational entitlement. The school or local authority remains responsible for ensuring that a suitable overall education package is in place.

Attendance patterns are reviewed with the referring organisation to make sure they remain safe, suitable and responsive to the learner's needs. The Lodge will not independently reduce or extend a learner's commissioned attendance pattern without agreement.

5. Recording and Reporting Attendance

The Lodge maintains an accurate record for every scheduled session. This supports safeguarding, communication with referring schools and the monitoring of learner engagement over time.

The record will show:

- The date and scheduled session time
- Whether the learner attended, was absent or arrived late
- The actual arrival and departure times
- The reason for absence or lateness where known
- Contact attempts and information received
- Any safeguarding action or follow up required
- Any cancellation or change made by The Lodge or the commissioner

Attendance information will be sent to the named school or commissioning contact through the agreed secure method on the same day. Unexplained absence, an unexpected early departure or a safeguarding concern will be reported promptly and will not be held until a routine report is due.

The Lodge reports facts and actual times. It does not decide the statutory attendance code or authorise absence. Those decisions remain with the school or local authority.

Records are stored securely and information is shared lawfully, proportionately and in accordance with the Full GDPR Policy and Privacy Notice.

6. Absence and Nonattendance

Where a learner cannot attend a scheduled session, the parent, carer or referring organisation should notify The Lodge as soon as possible. The reason will be recorded where known and shared with the responsible attendance contact.

If a learner is expected but does not arrive and no explanation has been received, staff will act promptly. The Lodge will use the agreed contact sequence, normally contacting the parent or carer and the referring school or commissioning contact to establish the learner's whereabouts and welfare.

If contact cannot be made, information is inconsistent or there is concern about the learner's safety, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what further action is required. This may include contacting the school Designated Safeguarding Lead, children's social care or the police. The Lodge will not wait until the next day where immediate welfare information is needed.

The Lodge recognises that anxiety, emotional distress, illness, sensory needs, transport difficulties and family circumstances may affect attendance. Absence will be considered in context, but the factual record and safeguarding response will remain clear.

Where a pattern of absence develops, The Lodge will work with the learner, family, referring school and relevant professionals to understand barriers and review the support plan, risk assessment, session arrangements and placement suitability.

6A. Late Arrival

Where a learner is expected but has not arrived at the agreed time, staff will follow the contact threshold and sequence recorded in the placement arrangements. If no separate threshold has been agreed, contact will begin promptly after the session start time.

Late arrival and the actual arrival time will be recorded and reported. Repeated lateness will be discussed with the learner, family and referring school to identify barriers and agree support. The Lodge will not independently decide how lateness is coded on the statutory register.

6B. Collection, Transport and Unexpected Noncollection

The Lodge does not provide transport. Arrival and collection remain the responsibility of the parent, carer, referring organisation or approved transport provider, as agreed before the placement begins.

At the end of each session, a learner will only be released in line with the agreed collection arrangements. Staff will supervise the learner until the agreed adult or transport arrives.

If a learner is not collected as expected, staff will contact the parent, carer, transport provider and referring school as appropriate. The learner will remain supervised until a safe arrangement has been confirmed. Any welfare or safeguarding concern will be managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

7. Attendance, Safeguarding and Welfare

Attendance forms an important part of safeguarding practice. Changes in attendance, repeated unexplained absence, unexpected early departure or a sudden loss of engagement may indicate concerns relating to wellbeing, mental health, family circumstances, exploitation, emotional distress or other risk.

Attendance information will be considered alongside other information known about the learner. Where The Lodge becomes concerned about safety or welfare, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will take appropriate action and share concerns promptly with the referring school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The school or local authority retains responsibility for any statutory attendance action, children missing education process or wider investigation. The Lodge will cooperate and provide accurate session records and relevant safeguarding information.

8. Supporting Attendance and Reengagement

Many learners attending The Lodge have experienced barriers to education and may need additional support to develop a consistent attendance pattern. Our approach focuses on understanding and reducing barriers rather than using punishment or shame.

Support may include gradual introductions, consistent staffing, clear routines, preparation for transitions, emotional regulation support, sensory adjustments, accessible communication, planned breaks or other reasonable adjustments that can be delivered safely within the setting.

Where attendance becomes a concern, The Lodge will work with the learner, family, referring school and other professionals to identify practical and realistic support. Progress may occur in small steps and will be reviewed alongside the learner's wider educational plan.

A temporary change to sessions will only be made through discussion with the responsible school or commissioner, except where immediate action is needed to protect safety. Any immediate change will be recorded and reviewed without delay. A reduced session will not be used as an informal exclusion.

9. Cancellations, Closures and Placement Review

If The Lodge must cancel a session or close unexpectedly, the parent or carer and referring organisation will be informed as soon as possible. The cancellation and reason will be recorded and reported accurately so that the school can make the appropriate attendance decision.

Where a learner's needs, risks or circumstances change, the placement will be reviewed with the referring organisation. The Lodge may pause or end a placement where risks cannot be safely managed or the provision is no longer suitable, but this will be communicated clearly and must not leave the learner without appropriate safeguarding and education planning by the responsible organisation.

10. Monitoring and Review

Attendance and engagement information is reviewed regularly to identify patterns, emerging concerns and areas where additional support may be required. It may be discussed within progress reviews, safeguarding discussions and placement reviews.

The Lodge Lead is responsible for making sure attendance recording and reporting arrangements are followed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead maintains oversight where attendance information raises a welfare or safeguarding concern.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following a significant attendance concern, a change to legislation or guidance, or a material change to the way the provision operates.

11. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Inclusion Policy, Behaviour and Risk Response Policy, Unplanned Movement Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Complaints Policy, Full GDPR Policy and Privacy Notice.