



# THE Lodge AP

— At Sandbach House —

## Attendance Policy

2025-2026

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| <b>Date of Review</b>             | January 2025 |
| <b>Date of Next Review</b>        | January 2026 |

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## 1. Policy Overview

At The Lodge we monitor regular attendance and punctuality closely. The Department of Education's National target for attendance is 95% and it is therefore important that students' attendance does not fall below this unless there are valid reasons.

## 2. Statement of Intent

At The Lodge, we aim to provide a safe and nurturing environment at The Lodge and the staff work hard to build and maintain positive relationships with both the pupils and parents/carers. By doing these things, we aim to remove some of the barriers that often prevent the pupils from attending school.

The Lodge believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We take a holistic approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

The school's attendance officer is Meg Holmes who can be contacted via [mholmes@thelodgeap.org](mailto:mholmes@thelodgeap.org). Staff, parents/carers and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

### We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with parents/carers to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

Irregular attendance can, unfortunately, undermine the whole process of education, leading to severe disadvantages for the student. Parents/carers have a legal obligation to ensure both regular and punctual attendance at The Lodge. The Lodge is legally bound to keep attendance registers, marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon by the attendance officer. Any pupils not physically present will be marked absent.

## 3. Legal Framework

**This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:**

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'

- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'

## 4. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy.

### Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

### Authorised Absence:

- An absence for sickness for which The Lodge has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which The Lodge has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which The Lodge has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

### Unauthorised Absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

### Persistent Absence:

- Missing 10% or more of scheduled school time over an academic year. This equates to approximately 19 days of missed schooling. A student becomes a "persistent absentee" when their attendance falls below 90%.

### Missing to Education

- Not registered at a school and/or not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

## 5. Attendance Expectations

The Lodge has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and will ensure that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents/carers and pupils.

### Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend school every day they are required to be at school, for the full day unless otherwise agreed on induction.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend every timetabled lesson.

The school day will start at 09:30am, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by 09.15am.

### Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 9:30am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark

- The morning register will close at 10am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by 12:30pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at 1pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

Class teachers will also take informal registers at the start of each lesson period to ensure that pupils are attending all timetabled lessons. Any missing pupils will be reported to the attendance officer and the member of staff on call at the time.

Parents/carers and pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

## 6. Absence Procedures

Parents/carers will be required to contact The Lodge office via telephone or text message before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent/carer has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, the attendance officer will contact the parent/carer via telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that the pupil does not attend The Lodge.

**The Lodge will always follow up any absences in order to:**

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than 3 consecutive school days, a home visit will take place to ensure the safeguarding of the child. If a child is absent from The Lodge for more than 5 days (10 sessions), consecutively or not, within a 10-week period, the pupil's parent/carer will be expected to provide a signed letter with a justification for the absence(s).

The Lodge will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, The Lodge reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The Lodge will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 95%, the attendance officer will arrange an informal conversation with the parent/carer.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, the attendance officer will arrange a formal meeting with the pupil and their parent/carer.

Where a pupil has not returned to The Lodge for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from The Lodge without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, The Lodge has the right to remove the pupil from the admissions register if The Lodge and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

## 7. Attendance Register

The Lodge uses Bromcom to keep attendance registers to ensure that they are as accurate as possible. They can also be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

The attendance officer will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session.

### This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way.

### The following codes will be used:

- # = Planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
- C1 = Leave of absence granted by the school for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- I = Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- S = Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- T = Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- N = Reason not yet provided
- = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- D = Dual registered at another school
- B = Attending any other approved educational activity
- J1 = Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- K = Attending education provision arranged by the LA
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- Q = Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
- V = Educational visit or trip
- W = Work experience
- X = Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Y1 = Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2 = Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3 = Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Y5 = Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7 = Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Prospective pupil not on admission register

When The Lodge has planned in advance to be fully closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

## 8. Authorising Parental Absence Requests

Parents/carers will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil’s education into account. The headteacher’s decision is not subject to appeal; however, The Lodge will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

## 9. Leave of Absence

The Lodge will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, The Lodge will expect parents/carers to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil’s previous attendance record will be considered. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from The Lodge. The Lodge is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

### **Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:**

- During Year 7 when a pupil is settling into the school, unless certain exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. the death of a family member.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil’s attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil’s authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of The Lodge will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The Lodge cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by The Lodge in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

## 10. Medical or Dental Appointments

Parents/carers will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents/carers will be expected to obtain approval for their child’s absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

## 11. Performances and Activities, Including Paid/Unpaid Work

The Lodge will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from The Lodge, understand that they will be required to obtain a license from the LA which authorises The Lodge’s absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by The Lodge for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from The Lodge to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the license, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend an educational setting maintained by the LA issuing the license.

**This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:**

- For a minimum of six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a license has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from The Lodge. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a license has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

## 12. Pupils Subject to a Part-Time Timetable

In very exceptional circumstances and where it is in a pupil's best interests, The Lodge will grant leave of absence to accommodate for a pupil on a part-time timetable. In such circumstances, the days on which the pupil is expected to attend The Lodge will be agreed in advance.

## 13. SEND and Health-Related Absences

The Lodge recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy, The Lodge will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for SEND pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHCPs or IHPs that have been implemented. The Lodge will secure additional support from external partners to help improve attendance where appropriate.

When The Lodge has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

**If a pupil is unable to attend The Lodge for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:**

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from The Lodge for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at The Lodge when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about Lodge events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The Lodge will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending The Lodge may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending The Lodge as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

**To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, The Lodge will consider:**

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.



- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to The Lodge where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

## 14. Working With Parents to Improve Attendance

The Lodge will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents/carers and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their parents/carers about the expectations of life at The Lodge, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The Lodge will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The Lodge will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure The Lodge has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The Lodge will ensure that parents/carers are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend The Lodge every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The Lodge will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at The Lodge can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents/carers to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend The Lodge regularly. The Lodge will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the key adult and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of The Lodge's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

## 15. Persistent Absence (PA)

**There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:**

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The Lodge will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary. The Lodge will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend The Lodge.

**These include:**

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

The Lodge will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, The Lodge will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The Lodge will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 16. Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention

The Lodge will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance.

**However, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:**

- Holding a formal meeting with parents/carers and The Lodge's point of contact in the School Attendance officer.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the Headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered. Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, The Lodge will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) guidance.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £80, per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days. If this penalty notice is not paid within 21 days, the notice will be £160, per parent, per child.

A penalty notice of £120 may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other actions such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, The Lodge will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

## 17. Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements.

### These may include:

- Requiring the parents/carers to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents/carers to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents/carers to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

