

Attendance Policy



DfE no: 850/7900

Approved by:	LGB	Date:	October 2025
Signed:		Position:	Chair
Last review:	October 2025	Next review by:	September 2026



Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed at least annually in line with DfE, HSCP, HCC and any other relevant guidance.

Author:	Title: Attendance Policy	Ref:	Date: October 2025
Inclusion Education is the working name of Inclusion Hampshire CIO registered number 1162711			

Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. A whole college approach	3
4. Benefits of good attendance	4
5. Pathways to attendance	6
6. Strategies for improving attendance	6
7. Roles and responsibilities	7
8. Recording Attendance	9
9. Authorised and unauthorised absence	10
10. Attendance monitoring	11
11. Safeguarding and external support	12
12. Links with other policies	13
13. Appendices	13
Appendix A: Persistent Absence Flowchart	14
Appendix B: term-time absence leave request form	15

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to encouraging learner participation and engagement by:

- Setting appropriate and ambitious attendance expectations for our learners
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reduce unauthorised absence and act early to address patterns of absence
- Detail attendance and absence procedures
- Articulate how Inclusion College monitors and evaluates attendance
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure learners have the support in place to attend college
- Describe the strategies and support Inclusion College and its staff utilise to enable an improvement in learner attendance and support families

2. Legislation and guidance

For all learners, including those aged 16-25 with EHCPs:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory safeguarding guidance)
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002 (safeguarding and welfare)
- Relevant sections of Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

These documents are drawn from legislation including:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996 (for compulsory school-age learners only)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (adapted for learner registration)

For learners aged 16-25 with EHCPs, this policy focuses on:

- Participation and engagement rather than compulsory attendance
- Safeguarding responsibilities
- Supporting learners to access their education and achieve outcomes specified in their EHCPs
- Partnership working with families, Personal Advisors, and local authority SEND teams

3. A whole college approach

Inclusion College strongly promotes, encourages and celebrates good attendance for all its learners and their families because of the benefits it provides to each learner's personal development and academic progress.

However, Inclusion College recognises that many of its learners are experiencing ongoing mental health needs, and some are in crisis. In these circumstances, each learner's attendance is viewed individually and within the context of each learner's needs and it is essential that Inclusion College, parents/carers and other professionals communicate and work together to understand, promote, improve good attendance on an individual, learner level.

Punctuality is part of Inclusion College's expectation of good attendance but as a college, with many young people being transported by Local Authority transport, this is sometimes out of their control.

Inclusion College embeds a whole college approach to attendance in which all staff, learners and parents/carers understand the benefits of good attendance and believe in this mindset.

All staff are trained in valuing and celebrating good attendance and identifying persistent or declining attendance to ensure early intervention.

As a college, we work in partnership with the learner and their family to be a positive, safe and welcoming environment in which they want to be present. We communicate the benefits of good attendance throughout a learner's time and celebrate this in reports and communication with families.

We want to work with our learners and their families to be able our learners to contribute to our college community but, for most, this takes patience and time for them to achieve.

Inclusion College has high expectations and standards for its staff around attendance and punctuality as these serve as important modelling for our learners. For example, if a lesson starts at 9am, it is the expectation that a teacher/tutor is always on site to meet and greet their students.

Inclusion College's strategic lead responsible for the organisation's approach to attendance is Amy Pontin (amy.pontin@inclusioncollege.org.uk).

4. Benefits of good attendance

There are numerous benefits to a young person's mental health and wellbeing, personal, social and academic from regularly attending college. At Inclusion College we feel it is important to communicate the positives of regular attendance.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of the benefits for learners who regularly attend into the following areas:

Learning and attainment

- Access support to meet learning and other needs from trained teachers and tutors
- Increase self-esteem through positive recognition of effort and achievement
- Enhance literacy, numeracy and ICT skills
- Increase opportunities for further education, higher education, employment
- Achieved recognised qualifications
- Develop forms of intelligences (e.g. emotional, interpersonal, logical-mathematical, verbal-linguistic)
- Develop confidence through learning with a supportive network of teachers, tutors and wellbeing professionals
- Increase organisational ability
- Access greater number of qualifications through regular attendance
- Experience the transformative potential of education
- Experience teaching and learning using sequential knowledge
- Increase a sense of worth and achievement through qualification and a love of life-long learning

Social and personal development

- Sustained engagement in education
- Experience a sense of belonging and community outside of the family
- Build and experience friendships
- Develop resilience
- Develop teamwork and understanding of others' needs and beliefs
- Develop social communication and interaction skills
- Experience positive routine and structure
- Experience a sense of achievement
- Engage with kind and nurturing adults who can be positive role models
- Develop positive routines
- Develop practical skills, such as cooking, gardening and employability skills
- Experience new cultures, beliefs and people to broaden horizons and break down prejudice and stereotypes
- Develop identity, purpose and independence
- Have the opportunity to experience new things – such as college trips, work experience and equine therapy

Mental health and wellbeing

- Access mental health support from experienced, trained and caring adults, including signposting to other services
- Develop strategies for positive mental health and wellbeing for success in college, post-16 education and workplace environments
- Develop the resilience and endurance to balance mental health and wellbeing with educational or other expectations (e.g. work)
- Develop confidence and self-esteem through relationships peers and trusted adults
- Experience a change of environment
- Support peers and others
- Develop friendships to challenge feelings of loneliness
- An opportunity to collaborate with others
- Develop positive relationships and routines (e.g. to support sleep)
- Attend a non-judgemental, accepting and calm environment
- Offer a distraction from other problems
- Engage with physical exercise to boost mental wellbeing
- Access therapeutic activities, such as art, crafts and music to benefit wellbeing
- A sense of belonging (one of our college values)
- Experience the benefits of a regular and consistent routine
- Achieve a sense of worth through achievement
- Enjoy the benefits of play
- Access to other positive role models
- Developing trusting relationships with other adults outside of their family to strengthen their connectedness to the wider world

5. Pathways to attendance

Inclusion College has three different Pathways and each one represents a different approach to attendance based on learner need. Details of this can be found below:

Gold Pathway: This Pathway is for our learners who we have identified as requiring the greatest level of mental health support. A bespoke curriculum offer is devised by consulting with the young person, the family and other professionals. Part of this includes a reduced timetable, which is focused on accessing our wellbeing team whilst developing and working to improving attendance over the duration of the 12-month programme.

Blue Pathway: This is our academic Pathway, and learners are expected to attend this programme full-time for the duration of the two-year programme. The course focuses on functional skills maths and English, vocational options and social interaction through our enrichment programme. Students on this pathway also have opportunities to access mental health support with the wellbeing team and /or other trained staff.

Yellow Pathway: our yellow Pathway, focused on employment at Inclusion Education's EB8 site, is a full-time pathway – as expected in a modern workplace. The course focuses on skills to gain employment and provides the opportunity for internal work experiences, work encounters and supported work experiences. Once a job is secured, the team will support the learner to access the workplace and to support both learner and employer in the early days of employment.

6. Strategies for improving attendance

Alongside our timetable interventions, to improve attendance long term, the following is a non-exhaustive list of strategies and supportive measures Inclusion College implements to improve attendance.

- A small step approach to returning to college, including simply “crossing the threshold”
- Implement a reduced timetable, with fortnightly reviews to look to increase the reduced timetable gradually and supportively
- Be met by a trusted member of staff at the start of each day
- Time at the start of the day (or another time during the day) with Inclusion College's engagement team
- Accessing additional therapeutic and wellbeing support within college, such as Mental Health & Wellbeing Practitioner, art or music
- A home visit to discuss concerns and identify appropriate support – including personalised packs
- A personal return to education plan can be formulated at home visits, identifying trusted adults, effective strategies and embedding learner voice.
- Social stories and visuals (such as timetables), led by the SEND Lead
- Arrange a review meeting with parents/carers, as well and with support from our Pastoral Manager
- Referrals for further support such as Hampshire SEN, Early Help Hub, Children's Services, CAMHS, GP, sleep support or other appropriate avenues of support
- Hold an Emergency Annual Review
- Find the “hook” into a learner's life to help them feel understood
- Daily tutor check-ins
- Social events – such as daily communal lunch with other learners and our staff
- Respect our learners and their experiences

- Prioritising building relationships with learners and their families
- Helping learners develop personalised long-term projects
- Ensure that there is never too much pressure put onto our learners – unless they are ready and supported to manage it.

If following all these interventions a learner continues not to attend education, and other strategies have been put in place, and there has not been any other safeguarding considerations which have prompted a Children’s Services referral, a referral to Children’s Services will be made under Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership’s Level 4 Threshold “chronic persistent absence” (HSCP Threshold Chart, February 2025)

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of college attendance across the college’s policies and ethos
- Making sure college leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole college
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the head of college to account for the implementation of this policy

7.2 The Head of College

The Head is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the college
- Monitoring college-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual learners
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

7.3 The Pastoral Lead

The Pastoral Lead is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the college
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to learners and families
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Providing regular attendance reports to college staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the head of college

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Amy Pontin and can be contacted via email at amy.pontin@inclusioncollege.org.uk.

7.4 Teachers and tutors

Teachers and tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the college office by 9.45am each college day, and in the afternoon at 1.15pm.

It is everyone's responsibility to share concerns around attendance of learners and celebrate good attendance

7.5 College Office Staff

College Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the college system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the attendance team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

7.6 Parents/carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the college and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every timetable on time
- Call the college to report their child's absence before on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the college with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the college day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the college and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Amy Pontin, Pastoral Lead, who can be contacted via amy.pontin@inclusioncollege.org.uk
- Parents/carers are responsible for collecting their children, regardless of distance, if their child falls unwell during the college day and has to be collected
- Ensure that children are at home and the responsibility of their parents when not timetabled to be at college

7.7 Learners

Learners are expected to:

- Attend according to their timetable and be punctual for lessons

8. Recording Attendance

8.1 Unplanned absence

If the learner is Under 18

The learner's parent must notify the college of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the college office staff, who can be contacted via 01256 587718 or absence@inclusioncollege.org.uk

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the college has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the college will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the college is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

If the learner is Over 18

If a learner is Over 18, we encouraged our learners – as part of developing their independence – to call directly into the college, using the details above.

However, the college will contact parents/carers directly to confirm this absence to ensure we are safeguarding effectively.

8.2 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the learner's parent notifies the college in advance of the appointment.

This should be done by calling the college office on 01256 587718 or emailing absence@inclusioncollege.org.uk.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of college hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the learner should be out of college for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The learner's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the college can authorise.

8.3 Lateness and punctuality

A learner who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

8.4 Following up unexplained absence

If a learner does not arrive for their session by 9.45am, and the Admin Team has not been contacted by the parent/carer to inform Inclusion College of the learner's absence in advance, it is the responsibility of the Admin Team to follow the following safeguarding procedures:

1. The Form Tutor will take the register at the start of the Form period. The register is open for 15 minutes. If the learner is not in their Form Tutor by 9.45am, they will be marked as "N" (reason for absence not yet provided)
2. At 9.45am, a member of the admin team will begin calling the primary contact number for all students marked "N" on the register.
3. If a voicemail facility is available we will always leave a message saying that [name] has not arrived and ask for them to return the call with a reason for absence as soon as possible.
4. All communication will be recorded, including if a voicemail message has been left on our MIS, Arbor
5. The admin team will update the register with the appropriate absence code once the call has been returned with a reason for absence and update the register.
6. If a learner's parents/carers have not been in contact with the college within 48 hours, the Pastoral Lead will contact parents and, if they do not answer, a home visit will be made.
7. If there is no one at home, the Pastoral Lead will contact the Local Authority's appropriate services and the police.

For further details of this, please refer to Appendix A.

To assist with this process, Inclusion College asks that parents/carers provide at least two emergency contact numbers prior to a learner starting so that someone can be contacted if a learner is absent.

8.5 Requesting additional support

If you are concerned about your child's attendance and would like to request additional support from Inclusion College, please contact our Pastoral Lead, Amy Pontin, (amy.pontin@inclusioncollege.org.uk) to discuss how we can support you and your child.

9. Authorised and unauthorised absence

9.1 Approval for term-time absence

The head of college will only grant a **leave of absence** to a learner during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out below:

- **Illness** (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- **Religious observance** – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the learner's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the college will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- **Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes** – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus

people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the college, but it is not known whether the learner is attending educational provision

- If the learner is currently suspended or excluded from college (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the college
- Attending another college at which the learner is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the learner not to attend college, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the college premises are closed
- Attending a holiday outside of term time to accommodate a learner's needs. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and monitored to identify any patterns of concerns.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible at the college front office or by emailing the absence@inclusioncollege.org.uk account. The head of college may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

10. Attendance monitoring

10.1 Monitoring attendance

The college will:

- Monitor attendance at SLT and safeguarding meetings and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the college and at an individual level
- Report attendance to the governors at every LGB (termly)
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

The college will benchmark its attendance data at whole college, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels, where possible and appropriate to do so, using Arbor, to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

10.2 Analysing attendance

The college will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data half-termly using its MIS system, Arbor, to identify learners and cohorts in need of additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support for these learners and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and develop strategies to address these patterns

- Identify learners whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

10.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Attendance and absence is discussed at learner review meetings, which can include Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Annual Reviews, Personal Education Plans (PEP), Termly Reports and Parent's Evenings and any meeting requested by parents/carers or suggested by the college

College attendance is reported termly to the Inclusion College governing board and Inclusion Education Trustees including the cohorts overall percentage, the number of 'persistently' and 'severely' absent, and is differentiated by category of vulnerable learners (e.g. Child Protection, SEND, EAL, Looked After Child, Learner Premium, FSM and Looked After Children). The overall attendance percentage is compared term-on-term and year-by-year.

11. Safeguarding and external support

As outlined in this policy, Inclusion College will be in daily contact with parents/carers or the student directly in any case of absence.

If Inclusion College staff are not able to contact the two emergency contacts provided during admission this will prompt an unannounced visit from a member of the safeguarding team. For Basingstoke and the surrounding area this will take place within 48 hours. This may take longer for learners living outside of this radius due to the small size of the college and may prompt a Children's Services referral.

If there is no one at home or no contact is made at the home visit the member of the safeguarding team will contact the police and make a referral to Hampshire Children's Services.

A learner's absence could be indicative of a deeper issue. Although Inclusion College will do all it can to support a learner and their family, there will be some support that it cannot provide and require the involvement of other partners and agencies, such as Early Help, CAMHS, ALP and the Local Authority.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, Inclusion College recognises the safeguarding risks associated with those learners who are absent from education and proactively acts to prevent this.

It is the responsibility of the Pastoral Lead for these discussions with the learner and their family following home visits and other communication.

Ultimately, if attendance does not improve, it indicates that Inclusion College is not the correct placement for that learner. As Inclusion College has said that it can meet the learners needs and they are not attending it will require the SEND Lead to lead discussions with the learner, parent/carer and the Local Authority SEN department at an Emergency Annual Review.

12. Links with other policies

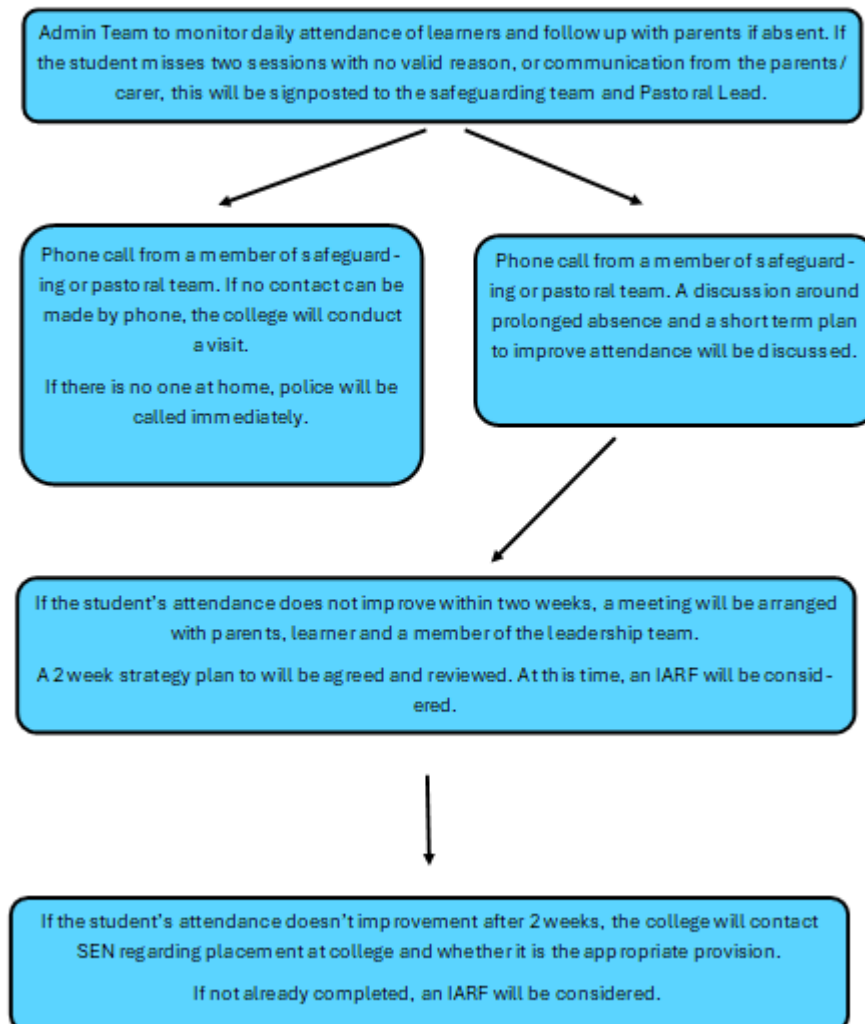
This Attendance policy is linked to our:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Mental Health Policy
- SEND Policy
- SEN Information Report
- Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy

13. Appendices

Appendix A: Persistent Absence Flowchart

Persistent Absence Flowchart



NB. IARF = Inter Agency Referral Form.

Appendix B: term-time absence leave request form



APPLICATION FOR THE LEAVE OF ABSENCE

To: **The Headteacher**

I would like to request that my child _____ be granted leave of

absence from _____ until _____ (please give
inclusive dates) for the following reason:

Signature of Parent: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

NOTE: The parent of the learner should send this application to the Headteacher or the office
before any leave is taken

INCLUSION COLLEGE

☐
☐

Request for absence for the above learner is **authorised**

Request for absence for the above learner is **not authorised**

Reasons for non-authorisation

Signed: _____ Headteacher Dated: _____

(a copy of the whole of this form should be returned to the parent)