

**Life Lodge Alternative Education**

**Attendance Policy**

**2024 - 2025**

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**Life Lodge Alternative Education Attendance Policy**

1. **Our Responsibility**

This policy outlines the expectations and procedures for attendance at Life Lodge Alternative Education. Regular attendance is essential for students to benefit from their education, develop essential skills, and achieve positive outcomes.

We have a responsibility in partnership with parent/carers and local authorities to ensure that all young people attend provision regularly and punctually. We aspire for all our young people to achieve 98% attendance unless there are medical conditions or other exceptional circumstances which have been notified to the provision’s reception.

This policy sets out the responsibilities of parents/carers and the provision. It is important that we do not blame a pupil or family when a pupil is regularly late or absent but rather, we should give support and encouragement to the pupil and family. Our multi-disciplinary team is committed to working with young people, their families and the team of professions around the child, to reduce barriers to accessing education.

This policy applies to all students, staff, parents, and carers engaged with Life Lodge Alternative Education.

1. **Aims of Policy**

* To ensure the provision meets their safeguarding responsibilities.
* To improve pupil attendance
* To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the provision.
* To communicate this effectively to young people, staff, parents, commissioners and directors of Life Lodge
* To raise educational achievement of all young people
* To provide support and guidance to parents and young people
* To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data
* To promote and reward regular attendance at whole provision, class and individual level.
* To ensure the provision considers the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when monitoring and reporting on attendance issues.

1. **Background to Our Policy**

Statistics show that there is a direct link between good achievement and good attendance.

* 20% absence is the equivalent to one day’s absence, every week throughout the provision year.
* 20% absence over 5 years is the equivalent to a whole year missed!

Regular attendance ensures better progress, both socially and academically. Academic work is easier to cope with and the learning experience more satisfying. There is also a positive correlation between attendance and happiness at Life Lodge. Young people who attend provision regularly generally find it much easier to form positive relationships with other children and with adults, and to develop effective social skills (a key priority for our young people), to follow provision routines and to enjoy all that the provision has to offer.

1. **The Role of the Provision**

* To keep accurate registers of attendance.
* Attendance must be submitted to **all commissioners** before **10:00 AM** each day.
* This includes reporting to **Capita (Local Authority Attendance Monitoring)** and relevant professionals supporting young people from Bolton Local Authority.
* If no communication is received regarding a student's absence on **Day One**, an **immediate home safe and welfare check** will be conducted.
* For students on a **Child Protection Plan**, the absence will be reported to the relevant local authority immediately.

Absences are to be registered by using the approved symbols placed on the register.

These are as follows:

**/ - Present (AM) Student attended the morning session**

**\ - Present (PM) Student attended the afternoon session**

**B - Educated off site (this includes college and community-based education)**

**C - Other authorised circumstances**

**D - Dual registration (attending another establishment)**

**E - Excluded (no alternative provision made)**

**F - Extended family holiday (agreed)**

**G - Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)**

**H - Family holiday (agreed)**

**I - Illness (not medical/dental appointments)**

**J - Interview**

**L - Late (before registering closed)**

**M - Medical/dental appointments**

**N - No reason yet provided for absence**

**O - Unauthorised absence (not covered by other code)**

**P - Approved sporting activity**

**R - Religious observance**

**S - Study leave**

**T - Traveller absence**

**U - Late (after registering closed)**

**V - Educational visit or trip**

**W - Work experience**

**X - Non-compulsory provision age absence**

**Y - Session cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances**

**Z - Pupil not on admission register**

**# - Planned whole or partial provision closure - All should attend (no mark recorded)**

Life Lodge has a duty to follow up absences to:

* Ascertain the reason.
* Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken!
* Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
* Identify the correct code to use before entering it on the provision’s management information system which is used to download data to the provision Census.

The attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of each day (morning) and once during the second session (afternoon).

1. **Recording lateness:**

If a pupil has not arrived at Life Lodge when the register is taken, an N (no reason) will be recorded in the register. If there is no valid reason for lateness it will be recorded as either “L” (late, before registering closed before 10am) or “U” (late, after registering closed arrives after 10 am).

“U” is counted as a half day absence (one provision session).

The parent/carer will be contacted if a young person is late five or more times in a term or two or more times per week. We understand that as a number our young people use local authority transport or arranged taxis, discussions will take place with the transport providers (usually the local authority transport department).

If no message has been received by 10am, staff will start to call all the contact numbers that have been provided to gain an explanation for the absence. If we still have not been able to ascertain where a child or young person is then we will make a home visit. If we are still unable to gain a response, we may report the absence to the police as the pupil will then be classed as missing.

1. **Purpose of recording:**

* To record on a student’s annual report the number of sessions present, the number of authorised absence and unauthorised absence.
* To provide information to the Local Authority and the DfE on attendance by completing the provision census for attendance, three times per year.
* To secure the attendance of young people by identifying the cause of absence and supporting families to make improvements in this area**. Our multi-disciplinary team is committed to working with young people, their families and the team of professions around the child, to reduce barriers to accessing education.**
* To regularly inform the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend provision regularly or has been absent without permission for a continuous period of 3 days or more.

1. **Admission Register**

* The admission register contains the personal details of every pupil at Life Lodge, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the provision, information regarding parents and carers and details of the provision last attended. The recording system CPOMs StudentSafe to store these details to record, monitor and report on attendance in a secure and timely manner.

1. **Expectations Set Out by Government Guidance on Pupil Absence**

Life Lodge is quality assured by various external agencies, including schools, local authorities and other external agencies. Upon these visits they will be looking at the provision’s efforts to improve attendance.

Issues they will consider are:

* where Life Lodge’s attendance lies in comparison with the national average
* use of data to improve attendance
* whether attendance has improved because of actions taken by the provision, including agreeing realistic targets with its local authority and meeting them.
* whether the provision has been active in monitoring and promoting the attendance of different minority groups
* how attendance compares with other provisions in similar socio-economic circumstances
* whether reductions in overall and persistent absence have been sustained.
* the impact of systems put in place to help learners catch up following periods of non-attendance.
* the support available to those young people who are unable to attend.

It is therefore important that our provision makes attendance a priority.

1. **The Role of the Parent/Carer**

* Absences must be reported via phone call or email to the designated staff member.
* To ensure that the pupil attends regularly, absence should only happen when a pupil is significantly unwell and therefore unfit to attend Life Lodge. If there is a particular reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty with attendance, parents/carers should let staff at Life Lodge know in order that they can support the family through this difficulty.
* Ensuring that Life Lodge is informed, by telephone, every morning of absence, giving a reason and an estimate of when the pupil is expected to return to provision ensure that we can meet our safeguarding responsibilities. If it is known that the absence may be longer term, we may agree to less frequent updates.
* Arranging all medical appointments, where possible, out of provision hours or during provision holidays – if this is not possible, Life Lodge staff should be notified prior to the appointment to inform of the need for the pupil to be absent for an appointment.
* Ensuring that your contact details are kept up to date by contacting the provision office with any changes. This is especially important in case of an emergency.
* Collaborate with the team around the pupil, to ensure that your child/young person is punctual and arrives at Life Lodge before 9.55am, ready to start the provision day.

**10. Punctuality**

Life Lodge understands the impact punctuality can have on a young person's education and we have elevated expectations when it comes to punctuality. We collaborate closely with all parents/carers and young people to ensure they adhere to the provisions policy. Therefore:

* Staff ensure all sessions begin promptly, and students must arrive on time.
* Late arrivals must be reported, and a reason provided.
* Persistent lateness may lead to a review meeting with parents/carers.

Young people are expected to arrive at provision by 10.00am at the latest. We work closely with transport so that young people are neither too early nor too late.

**11. Authorised Absence**

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “Authorised Absences”. These include:

* Pupil illness (this includes prominent levels of anxiety) - code I will be used. ***Our multi-disciplinary team is committed to working with young people, their families and the team of professions around the child, to reduce barriers to accessing education, including the reduction in anxiety.***
* Illness (with medical evidence if required).
* Medical or dental appointments (where evidence is provided).
* Bereavement or exceptional family circumstances.
* Religious observances.

**12. Unauthorised Absence**

There are instances when young people are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law, and these are known as “Unauthorised Absences”. Examples are as follows:

* Absences without explanation or valid reason.
* Holidays during term time.
* Waiting for deliveries or repairs
* Family outings for reasons other than significant celebrations
* Sleeping in after a late night
* Unapproved holiday

Where no explanation for an absence has been provided, parents/carers will be contacted by phone or letter. Where no reason for the absence is given or the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory, absence will be recorded as “unauthorised”.

**13. Term-Time Absence**

There is no entitlement to time off during term-time. Life Lodge is closed for 14 weeks of the year and parents/carers are expected to use this time for taking holidays and visiting family. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the Centre Lead/Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with Life Lodge’s policy as agreed by the Directors.

In line with legislation, our policy recognises that only in an exceptional circumstance will time off be allowed during term-time. Parents/carers request “time off during term-time” by email in advance of this absence and before making any booking. In certain cases, parents/carers will be invited to meet with the Director.

Any time off during term-time which has not been approved will be marked as “unauthorised absence”. If no advance application was made for leave of absence, then the absence must be recorded as “unauthorised”.

**14. Directors**

Directors support the Centre Lead and the senior leader’s team in managing requests for pupil leave of absence and take the position that families have ‘no right’ to such leave. Directors decide the start and finish of the provision day and determine the dates of the provision term and holiday dates. Contact can be made via the provision office or admin email.

**15. Attendance Expectations and Young people on Long Term Leave Due to Illness or Disability**

* Students are expected to attend all scheduled sessions on time.
* Parents/carers must inform the provision of any absence by 9:00 AM on the day of absence.
* Staff will monitor attendance daily and record absences, including reasons provided.
* If persistent absenteeism, this may result in a review of the student's placement.

If the absence is over a longer period due to illness or disability related issues, we will ensure that if the young person is well enough, they can continue their education either in hospital or by arranging home tuition. We will collaborate closely with outside professionals / agencies to ensure your child continues their education.

**16. Safeguarding Young people and Welfare Checks**

Life Lodge must be able to demonstrate to commissioners that it knows the whereabouts of each pupil and the reason for their absence. It is important for the local authority to be able to track young people if they are not attending provision and, in high-risk cases, for provisions to make a referral to Social Care to support the family and young people involved. If your family is moving house, please let us know if you will no longer require a place for your child/young person, with the date that they will be leaving. It is also helpful to us to have the name of the new education provision that will be attended. If you do not have this information at the time, please leave a forwarding address and telephone number so that we can contact you. Young people who leave the provision and their whereabouts are unknown will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and may have their details entered on the ‘Children Missing from Education Database’ if the pupil’s whereabouts cannot be located. When the provision has a concern about a pupil’s attendance record, Life Lodge will conduct a home visit, even if a reason has been provided for absence. This is an important safeguarding measure to preserve the well-being and education of children. Such visits may be announced or unannounced.

If reporting for **Salford Local Authority** young people with an active **Child Protection Plan** absent from school, it's crucial to report this promptly to ensure the child's safety and well-being. Life Lodge will immediately inform both the **School Attendance Team and The Bridge Partnership**.

School Attendance Team: Phone: 0161 793 2500

The Bridge Partnership: Phone: 0161 603 4500 (available Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm)

Emergency Duty Team: 0161 794 8888 (for concerns outside regular hours)

For more detailed guidance, refer to the Salford City Council's official procedures on reporting absences and safeguarding children.

If reporting for **Bolton Local Authority** young people with an active **Child Protection Plan** absent from school, it's crucial to report this promptly to ensure the child's safety and well-being. Life Lodge will immediately inform **Bolton Council - Early Intervention**

* + **Duty Number:** 01204 334220
  + **Emergency Contact:** 07747 766702

Any unexplained absence of a child on a **Child Protection Plan** will be treated as a **safeguarding priority**, with immediate escalation if required.

**17. Formal Warnings and Fixed Penalty Notices**

For persistent absence, i.e. unauthorised term-time leave or a minimum of 10% absence (absence need not be consecutive absence) Life Lodge will contact commissioners and the Local Authority to instruct further.

**18. How We Celebrate Excellent Attendance & Improving Attendance**

Young people with 98%+ and 95%+ attendance each term, will be celebrated with certificates and rewards being awarded.

In recognition of our young people who have experienced and may still experience barriers to their attendance and punctuality, for those who have made significant improvement, a certificate and reward will be awarded at the end of each term.

**19. Support for Parent/Carers**

* Life Lodge will provide regular contact and regular opportunities for parents/carers to meet with the staff and/or directors (if necessary) to put more support in place.
* Parents / Carers are welcome to book an appointment to see a member of the team at any time, via phone, email, and/or in person to arrange a meeting. We try to offer an open-door approach but booking an appointment ensures no disappointment.
* Teacher and parent/carer meetings
* Key worker telephone calls/regular updates

**21. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with best practices.

**20. References:**

Improving school attendance: support for provisions and local authorities (DfE 2020)

provision Attendance: Main Guidance (DfE 2020)

Governance Handbook (DfE January 2015)

Family Lives website [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk).