Attendance Policy

Date of Issue	01/09/2026
Date of Review	01/09/2027
Version	
Approval Level	Trust Board

Our school is part of the Embark Federation.

The shared vision for our trust is to “create schools that ‘stand out’ at the heart of their communities.” Our trust has four core beliefs; Family, Integrity, Teamwork and Success that are integral to everything we do. The purpose is to enable everyone to be able to ‘Love Learning, Love Life.’

Our policies are underpinned by our vision, beliefs and purpose.

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1. Introduction and purpose

Aldercar High School is part of Embark Federation. Embark's shared vision is to create schools that stand out at the heart of their communities. Our purpose is to enable everyone to Love Learning and Love Life, underpinned by the core beliefs of Family, Integrity, Teamwork and Success.

Regular attendance is essential to pupils' education, safeguarding, wellbeing, friendships, belonging and long-term outcomes. All pupils should attend school every day that the school is open unless there is a legitimate reason for absence. Embark's expectation is that every pupil and family is supported to aim for 100% attendance.

Attendance is one of the clearest expressions of Embark's collective commitment to inclusion. We want every child to feel welcome, known, listened to, valued, supported and that they belong within their school and within the Embark family. Our attendance work is therefore rooted in high aspirations, relational practice, timely support, professional curiosity and a shared responsibility to remove barriers to attendance.

This policy applies to all pupils on roll at [SCHOOL NAME], including pupils of compulsory school age, pupils in early years provision and pupils in sixth form or post-16 provision where applicable. Phase-specific and school-specific arrangements are set out in Appendix A.

2. Policy status and relationship with the Embark Attendance Toolkit

This policy defines the school's attendance expectations and procedures within Embark Federation's Trust-wide mandatory framework: statutory duties, accountability, safeguarding requirements, monitoring principles, support-first practice, admission register requirements and legal intervention arrangements.

The Embark Attendance Toolkit sits alongside this policy. The toolkit provides practical guidance, exemplars, templates, scripts, threshold cards, audit tools, training resources and school-tested approaches. It supports consistent, high-quality implementation without imposing one operational workflow on every school.

Aldercar High School will use the toolkit to support implementation and may adapt toolkit resources to fit the school context, provided local arrangements remain consistent with this policy and statutory guidance.

3. Embark attendance principles

Embark's attendance work is structured around seven principles aligned to the Department for Education (DfE) attendance framework and Embark's collective commitment to inclusion:

Principle	What this means in practice
1. A culture of belonging fostering a love of learning	Attendance improves where young people feel welcome, safe, known, valued and that they belong in a school community that fosters a love of learning.
2. Teamwork: attendance as a shared responsibility	Attendance is everyone's business. Young people, families, staff, schools, the Trust and wider partners work together to achieve optimal attendance.
3. Routines that work	Clear, consistent daily routines, early follow-up and timely support contribute to excellent attendance.

4. Informed support	Leaders use data, professional curiosity and knowledge of young people to understand patterns and barriers.
5. Relationships and communication	Schools communicate clearly and respectfully with young people and families, listening first and working in partnership.
6. Support-first	Schools work with families to act early to understand and remove barriers. Formal and legal routes are used when support is not effective, not engaged with or not appropriate.
7. Implementation, monitoring and review for improvement	Attendance practice is reviewed for impact, fairness and consistency, with learning shared across the Trust.

4. Legal framework and linked policies

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation, statutory guidance and national expectations, including but not limited to:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- DfE Working together to improve school attendance
- DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance
- DfE Children missing education statutory guidance
- DfE Keeping children safe in education
- DfE Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- DfE Alternative provision statutory guidance
- DfE School suspensions and permanent exclusions guidance
- DfE Communicating with parents about school attendance guidance

This policy should be read alongside relevant Trust and school policies, including: Child Protection and Safeguarding, Children Missing Education, Behaviour, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions, SEMH, Complaints, Data Protection, Lone Working, Alternative Provision, Home Visit / Safe and Well procedures and, where relevant, Post-16 / Sixth Form arrangements.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Trust Board and local governance

- Promote the importance of attendance across Trust ethos, policy and school improvement activity.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil statutory attendance duties and implement this policy.
- Review attendance data, trends and patterns, including persistent absence, severe absence and key groups.
- Provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders where attendance is below expectation or declining.

- Ensure relevant staff receive attendance training appropriate to their role.
- Share effective practice across schools and ensure attendance informs the Trust risk and school improvement process.

5.2 Headteacher

- Ensure day-to-day implementation of this policy and all local attendance arrangements.
- Designate a senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Ensure families, pupils and staff understand attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensure accurate admission and attendance registers are maintained.
- Ensure early action is taken to address patterns of absence and punctuality concerns.
- Ensure attendance concerns are considered through safeguarding, SEND, pastoral and inclusion processes where appropriate.
- Ensure local attendance arrangements are reviewed annually and remain aligned with this Trust policy.

5.3 Senior Attendance Champion / senior attendance lead

- Lead the strategic approach to attendance within the school.
- Ensure attendance data is analysed regularly and used to inform support, intervention and improvement planning.
- Ensure day-to-day attendance systems are effective, including first-day response and follow-up of unexplained absence.
- Coordinate attendance support with safeguarding, SEND, pastoral, behaviour, curriculum and family support teams.
- Review the impact of attendance interventions and ensure actions are adjusted where they are not working.
- Report attendance priorities, actions and impact to the headteacher, governors and Trust as required.

5.4 Attendance Manager.

- Monitor registers and first-day absence information.
- Record reasons for absence and ensure N codes are followed up promptly.
- Escalate attendance or safeguarding concerns to the Senior Attendance Champion and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) as appropriate.
- Support communication with families in line with school procedures.
- Maintain accurate attendance records and contribute to attendance reports/reviews as directed.

5.5 Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding team

1. Provide safeguarding advice and decision-making where absence may indicate risk.
2. Review unexplained, persistent or severe absence for vulnerable pupils.
3. Ensure safeguarding records are updated where attendance concerns indicate risk or vulnerability.
4. Escalate to children's social care, police, Children Missing Education procedures or other agencies where required.

5.6 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCO)

1. Review attendance concerns for pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical needs, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) or suspected unmet needs.
2. Advise on reasonable adjustments, support plans, phased returns and referrals to external agencies.
3. Ensure attendance is considered within relevant review meetings and plans.

5.7 Form Tutors

1. Promote the importance of attendance and punctuality through daily routines and relationships.
2. Complete registers accurately and promptly where designated to do so.
3. Maintain professional curiosity about absence, lateness or changes in attendance patterns.
4. Check in with pupils where attendance concerns are identified, where appropriate.
5. Report attendance or safeguarding concerns promptly in line with school procedures.

5.8 Subject teachers

1. Subject teachers are responsible for accurately recording attendance in lessons where required, reporting anomalies in class lists, and raising any concern where a pupil is absent from a lesson or expected activity.
2. Promote the importance of attendance and punctuality through daily routines and relationships.
3. Complete registers accurately and within ten minutes of the start of the lesson.
4. Maintain professional curiosity about absence, lateness or changes in attendance patterns.
5. Report attendance or safeguarding concerns promptly in line with school procedures.
6. Ensure that adaptive teaching mitigates gaps in leaning following absence.

5.9 Parents and carers

1. Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually unless there is a legitimate reason for absence.
2. Inform the school of absence in line with local school procedures on the first day and every subsequent day of absence unless agreed otherwise.
3. Provide accurate and up-to-date contact details and, wherever possible, at least two emergency contacts.
4. Book medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible and minimise time missed where this is unavoidable.
5. Work proactively with the school in partnership to support their child to attend regularly and to overcome barriers and challenges to regular attendance where they exist.
6. Engage with support offered by the school and wider agencies to improve attendance.
7. Request leave of absence in advance and only in exceptional circumstances.

5.10 Pupils

1. **Attend school every day and arrive on time unless there is a legitimate reason for absence.**
2. Attend all timetabled lessons, sessions, interventions and agreed activities.
3. Speak to a trusted adult if they are worried about attending school or if barriers are emerging.
4. Engage with agreed support plans **where** these are in place.

6. Attendance expectations

Embark expects all pupils to attend school every day that the school is open. The Trust aspiration is 100% attendance. Aldercar High School maintains high expectations while recognising that some absence is unavoidable and that some pupils require reasonable adjustments, targeted support or multi-agency help.

The school day, expected arrival times, registration times, register closing times, absence reporting procedures, attendance contacts and local escalation arrangements are set out in Appendix A.

Pupils who arrive after the register has opened but before it has closed will be marked late. Parents and carers must contact the school as early as possible if they know their child will be late, with a reason. Pupils who arrive after the register has closed will normally be recorded as absent for that session using the appropriate national code. Persistent lateness must be reviewed and addressed through supportive, proportionate action.

7. Absence reporting and first-day response

Parents and carers must contact the school as early as possible on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed. The school's local reporting time and method are set out in Appendix A.

Where a pupil is absent without explanation, the school will make same-day contact with the family as soon as reasonably practicable after registers have been checked. The purpose of contact is to establish the reason for absence, confirm that the pupil is safe and well, identify the correct attendance code, and offer support for return where appropriate.

Where contact cannot be established, where the explanation is not satisfactory, or where the pupil is vulnerable or there are safeguarding concerns, the school must escalate in line with safeguarding procedures and Appendix B.

8. Attendance registers and codes

Aldercar High School will maintain accurate admission and attendance registers using Arbor or the Trust-approved management information system (MIS). Registers must be taken at the beginning of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session, or at the school's defined registration points.

The school will use national attendance and absence codes accurately and in line with statutory guidance. Reasons for absence must be established as quickly as possible. N codes must be followed up promptly and replaced with the correct code once the reason is established.

Pupils who are absent from school but receiving remote education must still be marked absent using the most appropriate national attendance code.

Any amendment to an attendance register must show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for amendment, the date of amendment, and the name and role of the person making the amendment. Attendance records must be retained in line with statutory requirements and Trust data retention arrangements.

The school will share daily attendance data with the DfE directly from the MIS where required.

A summary of national attendance codes is provided in Appendix C. The school will refer to current DfE guidance for the full code descriptions and any future updates.

9. Leave of absence and exceptional circumstances

Government regulations specify that headteachers must not grant leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any request for term-time leave must be made in advance using the school's leave of absence request process, set out in Appendix A and the School Attendance Handbook. Wherever possible, the request should be submitted before the first date of the requested absence. Parents/carers must receive written authorisation before the pupil is absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or may be subject to prosecution where leave of five school days or more is taken without authorisation from the headteacher, where there are repeated incidents of unauthorised leave of less than five school days, or where unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. Absence taken for unauthorised leave in term time will be recorded using attendance code G.

A penalty notice may be issued where leave is taken and has not been authorised. If unpaid, this may lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

10. SEND, health-related absence and reasonable adjustments

Aldercar High School recognises that pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical conditions, mental health needs or emotionally based barriers may face additional barriers to attendance. The school will maintain high aspirations while making reasonable adjustments and providing appropriate support to enable pupils to access education as regularly as possible.

Where attendance difficulties may relate to SEND, disability, health, mental health or welfare needs, the school will consider whether support plans, reasonable adjustments, phased reintegration, pastoral support, curriculum adjustments, medical advice, external agency input or an EHCP review may be needed.

Where a pupil is likely to be absent for a prolonged period because of health needs, the school will work with the Local Authority (LA) and relevant professionals so that the pupil's education, welfare and reintegration are considered.

11. Part-time timetables, phased returns and alternative provision

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a suitable full-time education. A part-time timetable must only be used in very exceptional circumstances, where it:

1. Is in the pupil's best interests; and
2. Forms part of a clear, time-limited and, where appropriate, phased support for a medical or mental health need.

A part-time timetable must have the agreement of the school and the parent or carer the pupil normally lives with, a clear ambition to increase attendance, regular review dates, a proposed end date, and appropriate involvement of the LA where required. It must not be used as a behaviour management tool.

Where a pupil has a social worker or an EHCP, the school must involve relevant professionals in decisions about part-time timetables and review arrangements. Alternative provision, dual registration and off-site education must be recorded accurately and robustly monitored for attendance, safety, quality and impact.

The school must report instances of:

- Part-time timetables, off-site direction and use of alternative provision to the Trust (through half termly reviews and dynamically with off-site direction and use of alternative provision).
- Part-time timetables and off-site direction to the LA.

12. Vulnerable pupils, safeguarding and severe absence

Regular attendance is a protective factor. Unexplained, persistent or severe absence may indicate increased safeguarding risk. Attendance concerns must be considered alongside the pupil's lived experience, known vulnerabilities, safeguarding information, SEND, health needs, family circumstances and previous patterns of absence.

The school will have enhanced arrangements for pupils who are vulnerable, including pupils known to children's social care, pupils with or recently with a social worker, pupils subject to Child in Need or Child Protection planning, looked after and previously looked after children, pupils open to youth justice where relevant, and pupils identified through safeguarding, SEND, medical, mental health, pastoral or attendance processes as requiring additional oversight.

Where a vulnerable pupil is absent without explanation or prior agreement, the school will act promptly to establish whether the pupil is safe, seen and supported. Appendix B sets out attendance and safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable pupils.

Severe absence, defined as absence from 50% or more of possible sessions, must be treated as a high-priority safeguarding, inclusion and educational concern. Such cases require senior oversight, regular review, professional curiosity, family engagement and, where appropriate, multi-agency involvement.

Where severe or persistent absence continues despite appropriate support, the school must consider whether this may indicate neglect or other safeguarding risk and escalate concerns in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

13. Pupils missing during the school day, suspected truancy and off-site movement

Where a pupil is expected to be on site, in a lesson, in supervised provision or at an approved educational activity and cannot be located, the school must act immediately in line with local safeguarding and missing pupil procedures.

The school's procedure for reporting concerns, coordinating searches, contacting parents/carers and emergency contacts, contacting police or children's social care, recording actions and reviewing learning from incidents is as follows:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the senior leadership team/HOY/attendance and safeguarding team immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Headteacher.

- The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms, corridors and accessible spaces
    - All toilets
    - Changing rooms
    - The library
    - Any outbuildings
    - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 30 minutes, then the families of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parent/carer using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the families have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- A member of staff will record the incident, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Families and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

Suspected truancy, internal truancy or absence from an expected session must be followed up promptly. Where safeguarding concerns arise, the DSL/DDSL must be informed without delay.

The school's local procedures for pupils leaving site during the school day, including lunch-time leave, medical appointments, sixth-form or post-16 off-site arrangements, sign-in/sign-out procedures and safeguarding oversight, are set out in Appendix A / the School Attendance Handbook.

14. Attendance monitoring, thresholds and review

The school will not rely solely on annual attendance percentages or automatic trigger responses. Leaders will consider year-to-date attendance, attendance within shorter review windows, cumulative days or sessions missed, frequency of absence episodes, patterns of absence, punctuality, attendance codes and known reasons for absence.

The school will use data to identify pupils who require further attention and professional curiosity to determine the right response. This may include universal encouragement, targeted support, reasonable adjustments, safeguarding action, family support, formal monitoring, LA involvement or legal intervention where appropriate.

The school will monitor attendance through four lenses: volume, frequency, pattern, and reason/context.

1. Volume: overall percentage and cumulative sessions or days missed.
2. Frequency: the number of separate absence episodes or instances.
3. Pattern: when absence occurs, including days of week, sessions, lessons, proximity to holidays or assessments, punctuality and changes over time.
4. Reason and context: known explanations, pupil voice, family circumstances, SEND, medical needs, safeguarding information and previous support.

Review thresholds should prompt professional discussion in line with the Trust's attendance principles. Minimum monitoring expectations are set out in Appendix A. The Embark Attendance Toolkit will provide annual threshold cards based on each school's calendar, INSET days and review windows.

15. Working with families

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents, carers and families. Communication should be clear, accessible, timely and rooted in shared ambition for the pupil to attend, belong and succeed.

The school will seek to understand barriers before deciding the most appropriate response. Where barriers relate to the pupil's experience in school, school leaders must consider what reasonable and proportionate changes may be needed. Where barriers sit beyond the school gate, the school will work with families, the LA and wider partners to support attendance.

Communication about attendance should avoid deficit language and should distinguish between unavoidable absence, emerging patterns, unauthorised absence, safeguarding concern and situations where support has not been engaged with or has not been effective.

16. Attendance support, formal intervention and legal action

Embark adopts a support-first approach. The school will act early to understand barriers and provide proportionate support as part of a graduated response. Support may include conversations, pupil check-ins, family meetings, attendance support plans, reasonable adjustments, early help, SEND review, pastoral support, mentoring, reintegration planning, multi-agency work or referral to specialist services.

The school must report all instances where pupils have been absent for 15 days within the school year due to illness to the LA.

Where voluntary support is not effective, not engaged with, or not appropriate, the school may use formal routes, including attendance contracts, formal monitoring, notice to improve, education supervision orders, penalty notices or prosecution, in line with statutory guidance and LA arrangements.

Where the national threshold for considering a penalty notice is met — 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks — the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case must be considered individually and fairly, taking account of support offered, engagement, impact and context.

Legal intervention is not a substitute for safeguarding action. Where absence creates or indicates safeguarding concern, the school must follow safeguarding procedures immediately.

17. Recognition, encouragement and inclusive rewards

The school will promote and celebrate excellent attendance, punctuality, improved attendance and positive engagement with support. Recognition should support belonging and motivation, not shame or exclusion.

Recognition systems should be inclusive and should not unfairly disadvantage pupils whose absence is unavoidable, agreed, disability-related, health-related or linked to significant medical or welfare needs. The school should consider recognising improvement, reduced absence episodes, improved punctuality, sustained engagement with an agreed plan, and overcoming barriers, as well as 100% attendance.

18. Deletion from the admission register

The school will only delete a pupil's name from the admission register where this is permitted by the School Attendance Regulations and in accordance with statutory guidance. A pupil's name must never be removed from the admission register for any other reason.

The school will make required returns to the LA when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register, except where statutory exceptions apply. The school must provide the information required by regulation and LA procedures.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Attendance must be recorded accurately up to the date that the pupil's name is deleted.

In cases where parents or carers have made a request for Elective Home Education (EHE), the school must:

- Share agreed local information with the parent regarding the implications of the choice to EHE
- Notify the LA of the parent/carer request for EHE within working 5 days of the request being made
- Inform the LA's SEND Officer if the child has an EHCP.

The LA will acknowledge the request as soon as possible.

In circumstances where the LA believes that EHE represents safeguarding concerns, the request for EHE will be rejected and the child will remain on the school's roll.

Any concern that a pupil may be missing education must be escalated in line with Children Missing Education procedures and safeguarding arrangements. The school must consider whether additional safeguarding steps are required before, during and after any admission register change.

19. Training and workforce development

The Trust and school will ensure relevant staff receive attendance training appropriate to their role. This includes relational practice, working with families, SEND and health-related absence, reasonable adjustments, safeguarding escalation, expectations around registers, coding, first-day response, data interpretation, support planning and legal intervention.

The Embark Attendance Toolkit will provide role-specific guidance and training materials for attendance officers, senior attendance leads, class teachers and teaching assistants, pastoral leaders, DSLs, SENDCOs, governors and Trust leaders.

20. Governance, assurance and school improvement

Attendance is part of Embark's wider school improvement, inclusion and risk framework. Attendance evidence will inform school self-evaluation, school improvement planning, Trust support, attendance board activity, governance reporting and risk management.

The school must be able to explain the story behind its attendance data: who is absent, why, what barriers are known, what support is in place, what impact support is having, and what will change where impact is limited.

Governors and Trust leaders should review attendance patterns, including overall attendance, persistent absence, severe absence, disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, pupils known to social care, year groups, punctuality and any locally identified cohorts.

21. Data protection, records and information sharing

Attendance information will be processed in line with data protection legislation and Trust data protection arrangements. Information will be shared appropriately within school, across the Trust, with the LA and with safeguarding partners where necessary to support attendance, education, safety and welfare.

Attendance and safeguarding records must be aligned where absence creates or indicates concern. The school must record attendance actions, decisions, contact with families, support offered, referrals, safeguarding concerns and review outcomes using the school's approved systems.

Information will be shared with the LA as outlined in this policy.

22. Monitoring and review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner in response to statutory guidance, legal change, Trust governance requirements or significant learning from safeguarding, attendance or school improvement activity.

The school must review local attendance arrangements annually and whenever there is significant change to school day, staffing, systems or local procedures.

Appendix A: School attendance arrangements

Local field	School-specific information
School name	Aldercar High School
Senior Attendance Champion / Senior Attendance Lead	Mrs J Powdrill
Attendance officer / attendance administrator / office team attendance lead	Mrs S Kelly-Smith
DSL / safeguarding contact for attendance concerns	Mrs J Powdrill & Ms C Peplow
SENDCO / inclusion lead attendance contact	Mrs K Temple
School day start and end time	8:25am start of day 2:55pm end of day
Expected arrival time	From 8:00am
Morning register time and close time	8:25-8:55am
Afternoon register time and close time	12:10pm-12:40pm
Absence reporting time and method	Report absence by 8am of day of absence. Telephone 01773 712477 Option 1 Email: aldercarattendance@aldercarhighschool.co.uk
Safeguarding recording system	My Concern
MIS / attendance system	Arbor
Local authority attendance support	The Inclusion Support Advisory Service
How parents and pupils access attendance support	Head of Year Attendance Manager Early Help Manager Resources on school website
Date local arrangements approved/reviewed	Approved September 2026, for review September 2027

Appendix B: Attendance and safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable pupils

This appendix is a fixed Trust model protocol with school-specific role titles and systems inserted where indicated. It should be read alongside the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Children Missing Education procedures and Lone Working / Home Visit procedures.

Purpose

For identified vulnerable pupils, unexplained absence should be treated as both an attendance issue and a potential safeguarding concern. The purpose of this protocol is to ensure the school responds promptly, proportionately and consistently until the child is safe, seen and supported.

School-specific safeguarding systems

The school uses Arbor as its MIS for attendance monitoring and analysis. Safeguarding concerns, decisions and actions are recorded on MyConcern. Attendance and safeguarding records will be aligned, with relevant information shared appropriately between systems to support timely and effective safeguarding responses.

Scope

This applies to all pupils for whom absence may carry heightened safeguarding risk, including pupils known to children's social care, pupils under assessment, pupils subject to Child in Need or Child Protection plans, pupils who have or recently had a social worker, looked after and previously looked after children, pupils open to youth justice where relevant, and pupils identified through SEND, pastoral, medical, mental health or attendance processes as requiring enhanced oversight.

Core principles

1. Regular attendance is a protective factor.
2. Unexplained, persistent or severe absence may indicate safeguarding risk.
3. The school will seek to establish whether the child is safe, seen and supported as quickly as possible.
4. The school will work respectfully with families to understand and remove barriers while retaining professional curiosity.
5. Safeguarding action must not be delayed where a child's safety, welfare or whereabouts cannot be established. Where the pupil's safety has not been satisfactorily established, the school will undertake or coordinate a home visit or welfare check. Any such activity will be risk assessed and undertaken in line with the Embark Lone Working Policy. If the pupil's whereabouts or safety cannot be confirmed, an immediate referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police.

Day 1 response

1. Absence is identified through the school MIS and flagged to attendance/safeguarding staff.
2. Same-day contact is made with the parent/carer to establish the reason for absence and confirm the pupil is safe and well. The form of contact will be determined by the school as appropriate.
3. Where appropriate, school seeks return for the afternoon session or agrees a supported return plan.
4. Barriers are explored and support offered.
5. Where the pupil has a social worker or statutory professional, they are informed of unexplained absence the same day where appropriate.
6. If contact is not established or concerns remain, the matter is escalated to the DSL/DDSL the same day.
7. Actions and decisions are recorded on attendance and safeguarding systems as appropriate.

Day 2 response

1. The case is reviewed by the DSL/DDSL and relevant attendance/pastoral leads, considering known vulnerabilities and current risk.
2. Where safety has not been satisfactorily established, the school undertakes or coordinates a home visit/welfare check in line with the Lone Working Policy.
3. Relevant professionals are updated where appropriate.
4. If whereabouts or safety cannot be confirmed, an immediate referral is made to children's social care and/or police as appropriate.

Day 3 and ongoing absence

1. Where absence continues beyond two consecutive school days, or earlier where risk is high, the school moves to a formal multi-agency response.
2. The case is reviewed daily by safeguarding and attendance leaders until the pupil is seen, returns to school or risk is resolved.
3. A multi-agency discussion or meeting is convened where needed to agree a plan addressing welfare, attendance, barriers and support.
4. Where attendance concerns persist despite reasonable enquiries, the school will work with Derbyshire County Council Inclusion Support Advisory Service to review and escalate support and/or formal/legal responses.
5. Local Children Missing Education procedures will be undertaken as appropriate.

Severe absence

Where a pupil is severely absent or attendance patterns indicate escalating safeguarding risk, leaders must consider whether an individual attendance support plan, safeguarding plan, early help assessment, child protection referral, statutory attendance route or multi-agency plan is required.

Appendix C: Attendance codes summary

Schools must use the national attendance and absence codes in line with current DfE guidance. This appendix provides a summary only.

Code	Summary
/	Present – morning
\	Present – afternoon
L	Late before register closes
U	Arrived after register closed
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
G	Holiday not granted by school
I	Illness
M	Medical or dental appointment
C	Exceptional circumstances
C1	Regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Part-time timetable
X	Not required to be in school
S	Study leave
J1	Interview
R	Religious observance
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
E	Suspended or excluded and no alternative provision made
K	Education provision arranged by local authority
B	Other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered
V	Educational visit or trip
P	Supervised sporting activity
W	Work experience
Q	Lack of access arrangements
Y1	Transport not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Part of school premises closed
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed
Y5	Criminal justice detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole-school closure

Appendix D: School Attendance Handbook contents

The School Attendance Handbook is an operational document owned by the school. It sits below this policy and supports consistent implementation at school level, reflecting local practice and arrangements.

Please find a downloadable PDF of the Aldercar High School Attendance Handbook at :
Attendance - Aldercar High School