

# Attendance Policy



Liberty in the Wild 'Alternative Provision'

**Approved by Proprietors: Kamilla Woodburn-Minott & Elizabeth Crowford**

**Last Reviewed On: September 2025**

**Next Review Due By: September 2026**

## Introduction

This Attendance Policy outlines Liberty in the Wild Ltd (“we”, “our”, “the company”, “Liberty in the Wild”, “LitW”) practices with respect to those who attend educational and recreational sessions at the Liberty in the Wild – Alternative Provision.

### 1. Aim

The aim of the Liberty in the Wild attendance policy is to enable the Provision to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all clients. Regular attendance at Liberty in the Wild is key to consistent progress and enjoyment of learning, for this reason LitW is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

Liberty in the Wild takes a whole centre approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, children/young people and all staff members to ensure that children are attending as they should be as stated on their EHCP. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This document is supported by our policies on **safeguarding, bullying, behaviour** and **inclusive learning**.

## 2. Legal framework

**The Education Act 1996 states that:**

**The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable —**

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

**A person begins to be of compulsory school age —**

- (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

**A person ceases to be of compulsory school age** at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June) —

- (a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- (b) if he attains that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

Liberty in the Wild is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this document accordingly.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### Leadership Team

As part of our whole-centre approach to maintaining high attendance, the leadership team will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the centre's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full review
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the provision's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues

- ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislative changes and how to implement them
- nominate or appoint a Director to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- develop and engage with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings
- notify the LA and provide all necessary information when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register or when a child's name is added to the admission register

### **Mentors and Support Staff**

As part of our whole-provision approach to maintaining high attendance, the provision's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the provision's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the provision's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

### **Parents and Carers**

As part of our whole-provision approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at provision
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular provision attendance at home
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- ensure that their children arrive at provision on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment
- follow the set provision procedure for reporting the absence of their child from provision (**see section 4**), and include an expected date for return

- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary provision absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside provision hours
- use the provision as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the provision so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep the provision informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the provision day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at provision about the importance of attendance
- do not take their children out of provision for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Directors (**see section 4.5**)
- inform the provision in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren) along with the name of the parent/carer with whom the child shall live
- sign a home–provision agreement.

## **Pupils**

As part of our whole-provision approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- be aware of the LITW's attendance rules, and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the provision staff, parents or carers and the provision timetable
- speak to the Directors or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at provision or at home which may impact on their attendance
- attend all sessions ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the session.
- follow the correct set procedures if they arrive late (**see section 4.8**). This will help the provision to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a provision evacuation
- sign a home–provision agreement.

## **4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences**

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the Provision. Parents cannot authorise absences.

Staff should make it clear on the register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where staff have concerns regarding absences, they should follow the provision's safeguarding procedures.

When a child is to be absent without prior permission, parents/carers should inform the provision by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with further telephone conversations to the parent / carer.

#### **4.1 Illness**

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers will need to make a phone call to alert the provision on each day of absence.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the provision with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper. If these are not provided on request it may result in the absence continuing to be classed as unauthorised.

#### **4.2 Medical or dental appointments**

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside provision hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend provision for as much of that day as possible.

#### **4.3 Authorised absences**

There may be some exceptional instances where the provision will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

#### **4.4 Exclusion**

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. The Directors will arrange for work to be sent home.

#### **4.5 Family Holidays and Extended Leave**

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of provision term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the Director in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to provision. Parents/carers should contact the provision immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

It remains the Director's decision whether to authorise any request for absence during term time.

*If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents/carers may be subject to further action by the provision or prosecution by the local authority.*

#### **4.6 Religious Observance**

Liberty in the Wild recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of provision holidays and weekends and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents/carers will be aware of these dates and where possible, should give the provision notification in advance.

#### **4.7 Study leave**

The provision operates study sessions at provision within this time to help with revision and to reduce the amount of time spent out of provision.

#### **4.8 Late arrival**

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the provision day and again in the afternoon. In the morning, the doors will open at 9:30am. It is vital that pupils sign in on entry to LiTW to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for.

LITW also takes the attendance register during the afternoon session of each provision day. If a pupil is not present at the time that the afternoon registration takes place, they will be marked absent. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised.

#### **5. Provision action: following up absences**

Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the provision will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the attendance officer will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and centre's support systems that could help.

Parents/carers will be contacted if a pupil gives a reason for an unauthorised absence and there is doubt about the truth of the excuse.

Where a child has been continuously absent from provision for a period of 20 provision days or more, and where the absence was unauthorised and both the provision and LA have been unable to establish the whereabouts of the child after jointly making reasonable enquiries, the provision may remove the child from the provision register. The provision will notify the local authority when such action is taken.

**This document will be reviewed annually.**