



# **Safe Start Attendance & Admissions Policy**

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

Regular school attendance is essential if young people are to achieve their full potential.

At Safe Start we believe that regular attendance at our education school provision is the key to enabling young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Safe Start values all young people. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Our Attendance & Admissions Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of our education provision, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying and behaviour. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Race Relations Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2010.

## **2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was:

- present;
- absent; authorised/unauthorised absence
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

## **3. RESPONSIBILITIES – PARENTS/CARERS**

Parents/carers are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents/carers fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school. Young People who attend Safe Start education school provisions are referred to the school provision by their home school and in agreement with their parents/carers.

Parents/carers whose children are registered at a school and are referred to Safe Start education school provisions are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at the school provision.

Parents/carers should:-

- ensure that their children arrive on time, properly dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending the school regularly
- impress upon their children the need to observe Safe Start code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's education, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents/student review meeting evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with Safe Start to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance  ensure that they are aware of this attendance policy
- Notify Safe Start if their child is absent. This should be done as soon as possible - preferably on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the child returns
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- avoid booking holidays during term time

## **4. RESPONSIBILITIES – SAFE START**

Safe Start is responsible for supporting the attendance of students and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance. Schools are required to call attendance registers at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and to record whether students are present, absent or on an approved educational activity. For students of compulsory school age, schools are required to differentiate in the registers between absence that is authorised and absence that is unauthorised.

Safe Start will:

- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual students and for the student body as a whole - as one of their key tasks
- support parents/carers in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of students and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents/carers and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed
- produce education attendance policies which are consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents/carers, students and staff
- ensure that legal requirements are met
- give a high priority to attendance and punctuality
- identify clear channels of communication with parents/carers  ensure that up-to-date attendance data is available
- identify what is considered as authorised/unauthorised absence  make provision for first-day of absence contact
- have clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence  prioritise the importance of early intervention
- identify a range of strategies to deal with absenteeism
- be sensitive to individual students' needs
- establish systems for rewarding good/improved attendance
- establish procedures for re-integrating long-term absentees

- ensure that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness
- ensure that good practice is identified and disseminated
- be reviewed at regular intervals
- make clear to parents/carers what is, and is not, acceptable as reasons for absence
- state how lateness, both before and after closure of registers, is recorded and monitored
- make clear that leave for holidays during term time is granted only in exceptional circumstances
- encourage all staff to see attendance as part of their responsibility
- actively address all issues - such as bullying – which may lead to nonattendance

## **5. ATTENDANCE REGISTERS**

Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Registers must be taken at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. If the register is called at the end of the afternoon session Safe Start should ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to ensure that students do not leave the school provision between registrations. They should ensure that students can be accounted for in an emergency and that a student removed from the school at lunchtime will not go unnoticed.

Registers must record whether each student is present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity. In the case of a student of compulsory school age who is absent the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

When calling the register, the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil's name - gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, the school provision will use the national set of symbols as required by the DfE. When the reason for a student's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

## **6. ADMISSIONS**

At Safe Start we seek to ensure that all young people who are admitted to the school will thrive in a supportive environment and will be able to benefit from the rounded education provided and be happy within the school community. We recognise our duty to embrace diversity and to work to overcome prejudice. We do not discriminate on grounds of diversity, gender, race or religion.

At the point of admission to Safe Start's School it is made clear to all prospective students and their parents that they are expected to co-operate with the teaching and support staff and to promote the greater good of the whole community. We also wish to establish a full partnership with parents in order to promote the interests of the student body. This partnership must be based upon mutual honesty and respect. We have the right to expect full disclosure of any learning support assessment or identified need, or medical condition or disability, which could require specialist treatment, support or

equipment, and any behavioural or disciplinary issues known to parents at the point of application, and thereafter. This information is essential to assist with admissions.

## **7. PROCESS FOR ADMISSIONS**

For all referrals Safe Start will adopt a collaborative approach with home schools, the Local Education Authority or/ and Pupil Referral Units, to ensure that the needs of individual young people can be met.

To ensure a consistent approach to this the process will be as follows:

1. Following initial enquiry from a School/PRU/LEA (Pastoral Worker) it will first be established that a placement vacancy exists
2. Should the enquirer be unfamiliar with the work of the school further details may be provided and this should include a discussion about the young person's situation and suitability to the school provision.
3. An Initial Referral Form with as much relevant detail as possible will be needed. This form will normally be completed by the organisation requesting the placement.
4. Upon receipt of the completed form the Deputy School Manager/Centre Lead will make contact with the parents/carers, usually by telephone, to arrange a referral meeting.
5. The referral meeting will normally be attended by Safe Start Management, parents/carers, a representative from school, representative from PRU and the prospective student.
6. The meeting provides an opportunity to outline the aims of the school and review the school's induction pack. This pack contains important information about health & safety, safeguarding, equal opportunities, complaints and other policies together with details about the school's expectations from young people attending the school.
7. A copy of the induction pack is provided for parent/carer.
8. The young person is the key person in this meeting. They are asked their thoughts and feelings about coming to the school. This allows the young person to discuss the reasons they believe they are being referred to the school provision, how they believe by attending the school they can try to overcome any barriers to their education.
9. Input from parents/carers is also considered valuable to the process as is any further information from the school representative.
10. The 'student contract' and the 'classroom expectations' are discussed to ensure that prospective admissions are clear on the content and agree to adhere fully. A signed statement of this agreement is retained and placed on file.
11. It is good practice to include a tour of the facilities as part of the meeting to help the young person begin familiarisation and allow the chance to ask any questions.
12. Subject to the placement being agreed by all parties a commencement date will be confirmed, in writing, at the earliest opportunity.

## **8. ADMISSIONS REGISTER**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 Safe Start will maintain an admission register containing an index in alphabetical order of all the students at the school and shall also contain the following particulars in respect of every such student:

- a) name in full;
- b) sex;
- c) the name and address of every person known to the proprietor of the school to be a parent of the pupil and, against the entry on the register of the particulars of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides, an indication of that fact and a note of at least one telephone number at which the parent can be contacted in an emergency;
- d) day, month and year of birth;
- e) day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school; and
- f) name and address of the school last attended, if any.

The school management team will ensure that the admissions register is kept up to date with the inclusion of any new referrals.