



## Attendance Policy

### POSITION STATEMENT

Holistic Childcare and Education is a day and residential school for children and young people with complex additional support needs related to, for example, ADHD, Autism, or the effects of Trauma or Abuse.

We recognise that many of our pupils have experienced fragmented educational journeys, which can include prolonged absences, negative school experiences, or disengagement from formal education entirely.

Attendance is not simply a matter of routine; for our pupils, it reflects their relationships, wellbeing, sense of safety, and belief in themselves as learners.

This policy reflects our commitment to inclusive, nurture-informed practice and outlines our responsibilities, expectations, and proactive strategies to ensure every child and young person feels able and supported to attend and engage in learning. It aligns with national legislative and policy guidance, and reflects the principles of GIRFEC, the UNCRC, and the Scottish Government's "Included, Engaged and Involved" framework

### LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

- Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000
- Education (Scotland) Act 1980
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Included, Engaged and Involved – Part 1: Attendance in Scottish Schools
- The Equality Act 2010

### 1. HCCE ATTENDANCE PRINCIPLES

1.1 Attendance is a whole-school responsibility, involving collaboration across care, education, and clinical teams.

1.2 We adopt a preventative, relationship-based and trauma informed approach to support attendance.

1.3 We understand that attendance is a complex issue often influenced by mental health, trauma, neurodivergence, and attachment issues, and therefore must be addressed holistically.

1.4 Every child's attendance journey is understood developmentally, not just chronologically.

1.5 We support pupils through bespoke, flexible timetables where needed, with the goal of building resilience, safety, and confidence to increase attendance over time.

### 2. DEFINING AND RECORDING ATTENDANCE

2.1 Daily attendance is monitored and recorded in line with Scottish Government guidance, using SEEMiS codes and/or other formats required by individual local authorities.

2.2 Attendance includes all formal learning, it should be planned and progressive and can include—on-site, off-site, virtual, therapeutic, vocational and outdoor experiences—as agreed in individual learning plans.

2.3 Absence is categorised as:

- **Authorised:** where prior agreement or sufficient reason is provided (e.g., illness, family emergency, LA-agreed appointments).
- **Unauthorised:** where no explanation is given, or the reason is not accepted.

2.4 Any patterns of concern or reduction in attendance will be monitored and addressed in multi-agency review with relevant external partners.

### 3. HCCE PRACTICE AND POSITION

3.1 Our schools provide an environment where children feel safe, cared for, and emotionally contained—essential for effective learning and good attendance.

3.2 We offer a curriculum that is inclusive, trauma-informed, flexible, and responsive to young people's interests, readiness, and developmental stage.

3.3 All staff work to create a positive, nurturing school ethos where attendance is encouraged, celebrated and scaffolded.

3.4 All staff are trained in trauma-informed practice and the CPI model of de-escalation.

3.5 Key strategies include:

- Establishing trusted relationships with staff.
- Personalised transitions into the school day.
- Using visual schedules and structured routines.
- Gradual integration and attendance building where necessary.
- Engagement in planning and decision-making.
- Clinical professional involvement in any support strategies.
- Low demand tasks where necessary to support attendance.
- Quiet spaces indoors and outdoors to reduce stress during the school day.

### 4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Pupils are supported to:**

- Collaborate with staff on their own transition plan.
- Express views about their learning and timetable.
- Participate in reviews and planning.

**Staff will:**

- Build strong, attuned relationships with pupils.
- Identify and respond early to attendance concerns.
- Celebrate successes, including partial attendance.
- Use check-ins, visual tools, and adapted communication to understand barriers.
- Work collaboratively across care, education, clinical and with families or local authorities.

### 8. LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **Leadership Responsibilities:**

School leaders are responsible for creating a culture in which attendance is understood as a key component of wellbeing, safeguarding, and engagement. They ensure:

- Accurate and timely recording and monitoring of attendance.
- Regular analysis of attendance data to identify patterns or concerns.
- Individual and strategic responses to non-attendance, including early intervention, flexible planning, and multi-agency collaboration.
- Clear reporting on attendance as part of governance, SIP, and QA processes.
- Staff training and support in trauma-informed and inclusive approaches to promoting attendance.

#### **Governors' Responsibilities:**

Governors provide oversight, challenge, and support to ensure attendance is a strategic priority. They:

- Review attendance data termly through the Headteacher's Report.
- Participate in governance meetings, challenge areas of concern, and monitor the impact of interventions.

- Promote a governance culture that is curious, collaborative, and committed to continuous improvement in pupil outcomes, including attendance.

## **5. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE**

In line with *Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: Attendance in Scottish Schools*, HCCE adopts a needs-led, person-centred approach to attendance monitoring and intervention. While the national guidance does not prescribe fixed thresholds, we are informed by common benchmarks in Scottish education practice: attendance above 95% is considered good; 90–94% may warrant monitoring; 85–89% is a cause for concern; below 85% is of serious concern; and persistent absenteeism is typically identified below 70%.

These indicators support internal tracking and decision-making but are always applied in context. Many of our pupils have experienced prolonged absence from education or have faced complex life circumstances that impact their readiness and capacity to attend. While we recognise that regular school attendance is vital for wellbeing, learning and safeguarding, we also commit to understanding each child's situation holistically. Attendance data is therefore interpreted through a trauma-informed and relational lens, and any response is tailored to the individual needs, history and current circumstances of the young person.

5.1 All cases of non-attendance are treated sensitively, with the assumption that a pupil's disengagement reflects unmet need.

5.2 A key adult will liaise with the child, family/carers, and local authority (if applicable) to establish reasons and create a supportive plan.

5.3 Where attendance reduces significantly, a multi-disciplinary meeting or Professionals Meeting will be convened within 10 working days.

5.4 For pupils at risk of disengagement or placement breakdown, we will:

- Adapt expectations.
- Re-engage through appropriate outreach.
- Provide clinical support.
- Work towards re-integration at the pace of the young person.

## **6. COMMUNICATION AND REVIEW**

6.1 Parents/carers and local authority partners are notified of attendance concerns promptly and are fully involved in solution-focused planning.

6.2 Termly reviews of attendance are conducted for all pupils and included in individual education and wellbeing plans where appropriate.

6.3 Attendance data is analysed by the leadership team to identify school-wide patterns, celebrate improvements, and refine supports.

**Created May 2025 N McDonald**

**Review date May 2026**