Attendance & Absence Policy

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Statement of Intent

First Round believes that in order to ensure teaching and learning takes place, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

First Round understands that barriers to attendance are complex and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. As a result we will prioritise a safe and supportive environment as well as forming a strong and trusting relationship with both our pupils and their parents.

Our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – will also ensure improved attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling strong attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils, and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (alternative provision).
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils that require more support.

First Round has a named attendance officer who can be contacted by telephone or email (see appendix 1). Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1 Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance' (statutory guidance)
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSiE) 2025'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following First Round policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Managing Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND/SEMH Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy

2 Roles and Responsibilities

First Round will have overall responsibility for the following whilst pupils attend this provision:

- Recognising the importance of provision attendance and promoting it.
- Ensuring staff fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data together with discussing and challenging trends.
- Providing regular opportunities for staff to learn from each other's attendance expertise and share effective interventions.
- Ensuring provision staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

The Provision Attendance Officer (appendix 1) is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the provision and improving attendance of all pupils attending First Round.
- Developing and maintaining a culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance as well as having the overall strategic approach to attendance within the provision.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures.
- Monitoring the impact of implemented attendance strategies.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the provision's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Making timely and regular communications with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring it is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, accurately record pupil's daily attendance.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending every day, on time.
- Attending lessons and any agreed activities when at First Round.
- Following any support provided by the provision to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- The attendance of their children at First Round.

- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered.
- Notifying the provision as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments out of provision times where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by First Round to improve attendance.

Parental guidance regarding attendance and absence can be found at www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence

3 Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

Not attending the provision for any reason.

Authorised absence:

An absence for sickness for which the home school has granted leave.

Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the home school has granted leave.

Religious or cultural observances for which the home school has granted leave.

An absence due to a family emergency.

Unauthorised absence:

Parents keeping children off unnecessarily or without reason.

Truancy before or during a school day.

Absences which or have never been properly explained.

Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.

Leaving the provision for no reason during the day.

Parent

For the purpose of this guidance, a parent means:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person; and,
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of their relationship with the child.

4 Attendance Expectations

First Round has high expectations for attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to both parents and pupils. Pupils will be expected to attend punctually every day they are required to and to attend 9am until 2pm unless otherwise directed. Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5 Absence Procedures

Parents may find the guidance available at www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/ useful when deciding whether or not to keep their child off.

Parents will be required to contact the provision on each day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the provision by 9.00am to report the absence, a member of staff will contact the parent (by telephone call or home visit) as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend.

The provision will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.

- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.

6 Attendance Register

First Round will keep an accurate record of attendance regarding any child or young person who comes to the provision.

The attendance officer will oversee this record which can be provided to the home school or local authority upon request. Although the home school will ensure their own register is completed on a daily basis First Round records will help to provide clarification should any absences arise.

Staff will report to the attendance officer both am and pm in order to record whether pupils are present or absent.

7 Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the provision premises during lunch times only after permission from both the home school head-teacher and provision lead has been given.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the provision when taking them off the premises has been agreed and parents will have to ensure their child returns at least five minutes before the afternoon session commences.

Permission can be withdrawn at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns.

8 Truancy

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- All instances of truancy will be reported to the home school.

- In the first instance, a home visit will be made to the parent(s) of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the home school will consider issuing a penalty notice.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

9 Missing Children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the provision premises during the school day unless they have permission. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at First Round:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the DSL immediately.
- A member of staff will remain with any other pupil(s) whilst all other available members of staff conduct a thorough search of all areas of the provision premises as directed.
- 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 10 minutes the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the Police will be contacted.
- The DSL will record the event on a secure incident log describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing and details of all actions taken.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker or has any SEND 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.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately once the pupil has been located.

First Round 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 First Round Behaviour Policy.

The DSL will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred and a written report will be produced and shared with the home school thereafter.

10 Attendance Intervention

In order to ensure the provision has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by staff, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
    - Communicating any attendance concern with the home school.
    - Having a weekly review as and when required.
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams where necessary.

11 Working with parents to improve attendance

First Round will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.

Pupils and parent(s) will be visited at the outset by First Round staff prior to the child attending the provision in order that both are heavily involved in the educational plan moving forward and parents will be updated weekly on their child's progress.

Should an absence later occur due to barriers related to the pupil's experience in the provision, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the designated point of contact within the home school to address the issue. Where the barriers are outside of the provision's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will also liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

12 Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs whilst the home school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absences.

The attendance officer will keep staff appraised across within the provision regarding attendance and enable them to implement the appropriate attendance interventions where necessary.

13 Training of staff

The provision will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance.
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances.
- The provision's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.
- The provision's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it.

First Round staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

Appendix 1: Attendance officer contact details

First Round Alternative Provision
Designated Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Champion
Stewart Hopson –
Email: info@first-round.co.uk
Tel: 07729 490334

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the provision leads and any changes will be communicated to all members of staff as well as being recorded on the First Round website.

Staff will be required to read this policy as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027.