



Gateways Education & Wellbeing Ltd

Paving the Way to Success



Gateways
Alternative Provision
Learning your way



Gateways Tuition
Confidence through learning

Attendance Policy

Policy owner:	Director
Attendance lead:	Director / nominated attendance lead
Approved by:	Director / Leadership Team
Date approved:	04/05/2026
Review date:	04/05/2027
Applies to:	All staff, tutors, volunteers, learners, parents/carers, commissioning schools, local authorities and visitors

1. Purpose

Gateways Education and Wellbeing Limited is committed to promoting good attendance, punctuality and engagement across all Gateways provision. This policy sets out how Gateways records, monitors and responds to attendance for children and young people accessing alternative provision, tuition, home-based provision, online or hybrid learning, outreach provision and Gateways-led activities.

Gateways recognises that many learners accessing alternative provision may have experienced disrupted education, anxiety, trauma, unmet SEND, poor mental health, medical needs, emotionally based school avoidance, exclusion, or other barriers to attendance. Gateways will always seek to understand non-attendance in a child-centred, safeguarding-aware and trauma-informed way, while maintaining clear systems for recording, communication and escalation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Gateways provision, including on-site sessions, alternative provision, tuition, outreach provision delivered in schools or community venues, home-based provision where commissioned and risk assessed, online or hybrid provision, and Gateways-led trips or outings.

It applies to all staff, tutors, volunteers, learners, parents/carers, commissioners, contractors and visitors. It should be read alongside Gateways safeguarding, admissions, behaviour, SEND, risk assessment, online safety, medical needs, first aid and child missing education procedures.

3. Legal and guidance framework

Gateways attendance arrangements are informed by:

- the Education Act 1996, including the duty of parents to secure suitable education for children of compulsory school age;
- the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, where a learner remains on roll at a school;

- Department for Education statutory guidance: Working together to improve school attendance;
- Department for Education statutory guidance: Children missing education;
- Department for Education statutory guidance: Keeping children safe in education;
- Department for Education guidance on arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs;
- the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, including duties to safeguard and promote welfare;
- the Equality Act 2010, including duties relating to disability, non-discrimination and reasonable adjustments;
- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, where attendance information is recorded, stored and shared; and
- relevant local authority and commissioning school attendance, safeguarding and alternative provision procedures.

Although Gateways is a non-school alternative provision and does not replace the statutory attendance register of a school where a learner remains on roll, Gateways will maintain accurate attendance and engagement records and share these promptly with the commissioning school, local authority or other relevant professional in line with agreed arrangements.

4. Core principles

- Attendance is everyone's responsibility and is closely linked to safeguarding, wellbeing, progress and future outcomes.
- Attendance concerns will be responded to early, consistently and supportively.
- Gateways will work with learners, parents/carers, schools, local authorities and professionals to identify and reduce barriers to attendance.
- Non-attendance will be considered through a safeguarding lens, particularly where a child is vulnerable, missing education, open to social care, has an EHCP, or has known mental health or welfare concerns.
- Attendance support will be reasonable, proportionate and adapted to the learner's SEND, SEMH, medical, sensory and emotional needs.
- All attendance records will be accurate, timely, confidential and shared only with appropriate parties.
- Where attendance remains a concern, Gateways will contribute to multi-agency planning, review meetings, reintegration planning, EHCP reviews and safeguarding processes as required.

5. Responsibilities

Director / leadership: The Director and leadership team will ensure attendance systems are in place, staff understand expectations, attendance information is monitored, safeguarding concerns are escalated, and attendance patterns are reviewed to improve provision and support.

Attendance lead: The attendance lead will oversee attendance recording, first-day response, communication with parents/carers and commissioners, follow-up of unexplained absence, and the monitoring of attendance patterns.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: The DSL will consider whether any absence, missing session, unexplained non-attendance, change in pattern or lack of contact creates a safeguarding concern and will take action in line with safeguarding procedures.

All staff and tutors: All staff and tutors must record attendance promptly, report unexplained absence, share concerns without delay, maintain professional records and follow agreed communication and escalation procedures.

Parents/carers: Parents/carers are expected to support attendance, ensure the learner arrives or logs in on time, notify Gateways of absence as soon as possible, provide reasons for non-attendance, update contact details and work with Gateways and commissioners to remove barriers.

Commissioning schools and local authorities: Where a learner is placed with Gateways by a school or local authority, the commissioner remains responsible for its statutory duties. Gateways will provide attendance information and raise concerns so that the commissioner can discharge its duties and coordinate support.

6. Attendance expectations

Learners are expected to attend all agreed sessions, arrive or log in on time, remain for the full agreed session unless otherwise arranged, and engage with the planned learning or support activity. Timetables may be personalised and may include gradual reintegration, reduced or phased sessions, online learning, home tuition, outreach or hybrid arrangements where this is part of the agreed plan.

Gateways recognises that attendance may need to be built gradually for some learners. Any phased timetable or alternative attendance arrangement should be recorded, reviewed and agreed with the parent/carer, learner where appropriate, referring school, local authority or commissioner.

7. Recording attendance

Gateways will record attendance for every agreed session. Attendance records should include the learner's name, date, session time, provision type, attendance outcome, reason for absence where known, engagement notes where relevant, and any safeguarding or follow-up action required.

Attendance category	Gateways record	Action required
Present	Learner attends the agreed session on site, online, at home or at another agreed venue.	Record attendance and any engagement notes.
Late	Learner arrives after the agreed start time or joins an online session late.	Record time of arrival, reason if known, and any pattern of concern.
Authorised absence / notified non-attendance	Parent/carer, school or commissioner has provided a reason before or on the day of absence.	Record reason and share with the commissioning school or local authority as agreed.
Unexplained absence	Learner does not attend and no reason has been received.	Follow first-day contact and safeguarding escalation procedures.
Cancelled by Gateways	Gateways is unable to provide the agreed session.	Record reason, inform relevant parties and rearrange where appropriate.
Alternative arrangement	Education is provided through a changed timetable, online session, home session or outreach arrangement.	Record the agreed arrangement and attendance/engagement outcome.

8. Absence reporting procedure

Parents/carers must notify Gateways as early as possible if a learner is unable to attend an agreed session. Where the learner is placed by a school or local authority, the parent/carer may also need to notify the commissioning school or local authority in line with their procedures.

The reason for absence should be recorded clearly. Where absence relates to illness, medical appointments, mental health, anxiety, transport issues, family circumstances or refusal to attend, Gateways will respond supportively and consider whether further support, adjustments or safeguarding action is required.

9. Unexplained absence and first-day response

If a learner does not attend an agreed session and no reason has been received, staff must follow the first-day response procedure. The level of response will be informed by the learner's risk assessment, known vulnerabilities, age, SEND, safeguarding information, history of absconding or missing episodes, and any current concerns.

1. Check the timetable, booking record and any known planned absence information.
2. Attempt to contact the parent/carer using the agreed contact details.
3. Notify the attendance lead or DSL if contact is not made promptly or if the learner is considered vulnerable.

4. Inform the commissioning school, local authority or relevant professional in line with agreed reporting arrangements.
5. Record all attempted contacts, responses received, decisions made and actions taken.
6. Escalate to the DSL immediately where there is any safeguarding concern, inability to confirm the learner is safe, or pattern of repeated unexplained absence.

10. Safeguarding and children missing education

Attendance concerns can be an indicator of safeguarding need. Unexplained absence, repeated missed sessions, sudden changes in attendance, inability to contact parents/carers, or concerns that a child may be missing education must be reported to the DSL without delay.

Where Gateways is unable to establish that a learner is safe, or where absence indicates potential harm, neglect, exploitation, domestic abuse, mental health crisis, child missing education concerns or other safeguarding risk, Gateways will follow its safeguarding procedures and contact the appropriate agency. This may include the commissioning school, local authority attendance or CME team, children's social care, police or emergency services where necessary.

11. Persistent absence, reduced engagement and barriers to attendance

Where a learner's attendance or engagement reduces, Gateways will seek to understand the reasons and put support in place. This may include discussion with the learner and parent/carer, review of the risk assessment, review of the timetable, sensory or environmental adjustments, changes to staffing or location, online or hybrid sessions, a phased return, transport planning, wellbeing support, or multi-agency review.

Gateways will avoid punitive responses to non-attendance where the underlying issue is anxiety, trauma, mental health, unmet SEND or medical need. However, Gateways will maintain clear communication, accurate records and appropriate escalation so that learners do not drift out of education without support.

12. SEND, SEMH, medical needs and emotionally based school avoidance

Gateways will consider whether attendance barriers are linked to SEND, disability, anxiety, trauma, medical needs, social, emotional or mental health needs, sensory differences or emotionally based school avoidance. Reasonable adjustments will be considered in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the learner's individual needs.

Where a learner has an EHCP, Gateways will share attendance and engagement information to support annual reviews, emergency reviews, provision planning and discussions about whether the current placement or package remains suitable. Where a child cannot attend because of health needs, Gateways will work with the commissioner and relevant professionals to support access to suitable education as appropriate.

13. Online, home-based, hybrid and outreach provision

For online provision, attendance means the learner joins the agreed session at the agreed time and remains engaged as far as they are able. Staff should record whether the learner attended, arrived late, left early, did not engage, had technical difficulties, or required follow-up support.

For home-based or outreach provision, staff must follow lone working, safeguarding and risk assessment procedures. If there is no answer at the home, the learner is unavailable, or the staff member has any welfare concern, the attendance lead or DSL must be informed and the absence procedure followed.

14. Lateness, early leaving and transport

Persistent lateness or early leaving may indicate unmet need, transport difficulty, anxiety, avoidance, family stress or safeguarding concern. Staff must record lateness and early leaving, including times and reasons

where known. Patterns should be reviewed by the attendance lead and shared with the commissioner where appropriate.

Where transport is arranged by parents/carers, a school, taxi provider or local authority, Gateways will record issues that affect attendance and share these with the appropriate party. Any concern about the safety of transport arrangements must be reported to the DSL.

15. Planned absence, appointments and holidays

Parents/carers should inform Gateways in advance of planned absence, medical appointments, professional appointments, family circumstances or other reasons the learner will miss a session. Gateways will record planned absence and share information with the commissioner where required.

Where a learner remains on a school roll, decisions about authorising absence, term-time holidays and statutory attendance coding remain with the school in line with the law and DfE guidance. Gateways will provide attendance information to support accurate school records but does not replace the school's statutory decision-making role.

16. Information sharing, records and confidentiality

Attendance records will be stored securely and processed in line with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and Gateways data protection procedures. Information will be shared with parents/carers, schools, local authorities, social care, health professionals or other agencies where there is a lawful basis, safeguarding need, contractual requirement or agreed commissioning arrangement.

Attendance information shared externally should be accurate, factual, proportionate and relevant. Staff should avoid subjective or judgemental language and should distinguish between fact, professional concern and action taken.

17. Monitoring, quality assurance and review

The Director, attendance lead and DSL will monitor attendance records to identify patterns, barriers, safeguarding concerns, repeated cancellations, timetable issues, transport concerns and learners at risk of disengagement or missing education. Findings will inform individual support plans, risk assessments, commissioning discussions and wider provision improvement.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes, if Gateways provision changes, following a significant attendance or safeguarding concern, or where monitoring identifies the need for improvement.

18. Useful links

- DfE: Working together to improve school attendance
- DfE: Children missing education statutory guidance
- DfE: Keeping children safe in education
- DfE: Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Education Act 1996
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Equality Act 2010

19. Key contacts

Attendance Lead:	Director / nominated attendance lead
Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Director / nominated DSL
Deputy DSL:	Nominated deputy DSL, where applicable

20. Policy approval

Approved by: Carly Mason

Role: Director

Date: 04/05/2026

Next review due: 04/05/2027