

Learner Attendance, Absence and Abscondence Policy

POLICY APPROVAL					
Approval Required	Indicate with a tick (✓)		Annual Review Required	Indicate with a tick (✓)	
	Yes ✓	No		Yes ✓	No
Approval Panel	Loren Janes				
Approved by	Name: Loren Janes		Signature: 	Date: October 2025	
Policy Review Date	September 2026				

Policy Overview

Futures Changing Ltd recognises that regular attendance is essential for learners to achieve their full potential, maintain wellbeing, and develop personally and socially. Consistent attendance is directly linked to safeguarding, academic progress, and emotional development.

This policy sets out the procedures and expectations for attendance, managing absences, and responding to incidents where a learner goes missing or absconds.

It aligns with the following statutory guidance:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2024)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023)

We are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment, ensuring every learner can thrive. Swift and effective action will be taken to secure the safety and prompt return of any learner who goes missing or absconds.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All learners enrolled at Futures Changing Ltd.
- All staff responsible for attendance, supervision, and safeguarding.
- Parents, carers, schools, and referral partners supporting learner engagement.

Objectives

The following objectives set out the aims of this policy in line with national attendance and safeguarding guidance. They highlight Futures Changing Ltd.'s commitment to creating a safe, structured environment where learners are supported to attend, participate, and succeed.

- To locate any missing learner quickly and safely.
- To ensure learners leave the premises only with permission, and where appropriate, accompanied by an authorised adult.
- To maintain a safe and secure environment during all operating hours.
- To ensure staff maintain appropriate supervision of learners at all times.
- To ensure consistent, accurate, and GDPR-compliant attendance records.

Responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities are essential for maintaining high attendance and ensuring swift action when concerns arise. The following outlines what is expected from learners, parents or carers, and staff to ensure consistency, accountability, and effective safeguarding practice.

Learners

- Attend all sessions regularly and on time.
- Notify staff promptly of unavoidable absences.
- Follow all centre rules on conduct, punctuality, and attendance.

Parents/Carers

- Inform the centre of any absence before the start of the session.

- Provide supporting evidence where requested (e.g. medical certificates).
- Work collaboratively with staff to address attendance concerns.

Staff

- Record attendance, lateness, and absences accurately each session.
- Follow up promptly on unexplained absences to ensure learner safety.
- Report persistent absence or patterns of concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Liaise with referral partners and parents where attendance requires intervention.

Registration and Record Keeping

Accurate and timely recording of attendance is vital to safeguarding and educational progress. This section details how attendance is monitored, when registers are taken, and how information is shared with referral partners to maintain transparency and early intervention.

- Registers are taken twice daily – morning and afternoon – for all learners.
- Attendance is recorded via the official register system, including late arrivals and early departures.
- Exact times and reasons for lateness or early leaving are logged.
- Attendance data is reported daily to each learner's referral partner or commissioning organisation in line with SLA agreements.
- Any attendance concerns linked to wellbeing, safeguarding, or disengagement are shared promptly with the DSL and referral partner.
- Attendance data is securely stored and processed in compliance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Not all absences are equal; some are unavoidable while others may indicate disengagement or safeguarding concerns. This section explains how Futures Changing Ltd defines authorised and unauthorised absences, ensuring fairness, consistency, and alignment with DfE guidance.

Authorised absences include:

- Illness or medical appointments
- Recognised religious observance
- Family emergencies (agreed in advance)

Unauthorised absences include:

- Absence without permission or valid reason
- Repeated lateness
- Leaving site without consent

Persistent unauthorised absence will trigger escalation under the Behaviour and Safeguarding policies, and may involve referral to external agencies.

Positive Reinforcement and Support

Encouraging good attendance through positive reinforcement helps build motivation and a sense of belonging. This section explains how Futures Changing Ltd recognises strong attendance and supports learners who may face barriers due to health, wellbeing, or personal challenges.

- Learners with excellent or improved attendance are recognised through praise, certificates, or other incentives.
- Where barriers exist (e.g. SEN, mental health, anxiety), staff will implement reasonable adjustments and pastoral support to improve engagement.
- Individual attendance plans may be developed to ensure fair, supportive practice.

Learners Leaving Premises During Lunch Break

Futures Changing recognises that some learners may wish to leave the premises during their designated lunch break. While we value learner independence, safety remains our top priority.

Conditions of consent:

- Learners may leave only during their scheduled lunch break.
- Written parent/guardian consent is required (see Appendix A).
- This privilege may be revoked if deemed unsafe or misused.
- Futures Changing and its staff remain responsible for learners during this period.
- Learners must return on time and continue to meet conduct and attendance expectations.

Missing or Absconding Learners

A missing or absconding learner is treated as a potential safeguarding emergency. This section explains the immediate actions staff must take to locate the learner quickly, communicate with parents and authorities, and prevent recurrence through review and support.

Immediate Actions

1. Notify the Centre Manager and DSL immediately, giving the learner's name, last known location, and time.
2. Ensure remaining learners are supervised safely.
3. Staff familiar with the learner will search the building and immediate area.
4. If the learner is not found promptly, parents/carers and referral partners are informed.
5. If there is any risk of harm or danger, the police will be contacted immediately.
6. Once the learner is found, they will be returned safely, and an incident review will be completed.

If a learner absconds:

- Staff should not chase but maintain visual contact if safe.
- The DSL is informed immediately.
- A risk assessment will be updated, and parents/carers contacted.
- A review meeting will identify underlying causes (e.g. stress, bullying, unmet needs) and support plans will be implemented.

Safeguarding and Attendance

Attendance is a crucial safeguarding indicator, and patterns of absence often reflect wider concerns. This section reinforces the link between attendance monitoring and child protection, outlining how information is shared and acted upon in accordance with KCSIE and statutory procedures.

- Attendance monitoring is a key safeguarding measure.
- Unexplained or repeated absences may indicate risk of harm, neglect, or exploitation.
- Staff must report concerns immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.
- The DSL will liaise with referral partners, social care, or police where thresholds for intervention are met.
- All incidents are logged within the Safeguarding and Incident Recording System CPOMS.

Communication with Parents and Partners

Open communication between Futures Changing, parents, and referral partners underpins effective safeguarding and attendance management. This section explains how attendance information and concerns are shared, ensuring transparency and timely collaboration to support each learner.

- Parents/carers will be informed promptly of absences, lateness, or concerning patterns.
- Collaborative meetings will be held to identify barriers and agree action plans.
- Referral partners and commissioning schools receive daily attendance reports and updates on any significant incidents.
- All communication is recorded and stored securely.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Regular review of attendance data and incidents ensures that Futures Changing maintains high standards of safeguarding and continuous improvement. This section describes how monitoring and evaluation are embedded in practice and how policy updates are managed.

- Attendance data and missing learner reports are reviewed termly by senior leadership.
- The DSL and Centre Manager monitor patterns and identify safeguarding risks.
- The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance or operational needs change.

Appendix A – Parent/Guardian Lunch Break Consent Form

Futures Changing recognises that some students may wish to leave the premises during their designated lunch break. We value student independence; however, safety remains our top priority.

Please review and complete the form below:

☐ I GIVE consent for my child to leave the Futures Changing premises during their lunch break.
☐ I DO NOT GIVE consent for my child to leave the Futures Changing premises during their lunch break.

Student Name: _____

Programme: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Phone Number: _____