



# Attendance Policy

Director: Danielle Ford

Date ratified: September 2025

Review date: September 2026

## **Statement of Intent**

It is our intention to work in partnership with the Local Authority and parents/carers to support learners in attending their education with Do Talk Write. It is our intention to support and encourage learners to attend their education at our Alternative Provision. We recognise that it is our responsibility to do everything possible to raise parent/carers awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality and that it is a legal requirement to attend provision regularly.

## **Introduction**

Persistent absence is a serious problem for learners. The Department of Education state that any pupil with 90% attendance or below is a persistent absentee from education. Much of the work children miss when they are absent is never made up, leaving these learners at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their learning career. There is also a clear link between poor attendance at learning provisions and low levels of achievements.

Parents of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years old) children have a legal duty to ensure their children receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at provision or otherwise than at their learning provision (this includes home education). If a child is registered at school, parents have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

## **Aims and Objectives**

- To continue to raise levels of achievement and participation by maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
- To inform parents/carers of punctuality and attendance issues.
- To identify the causes of non-attendance and act upon them.
- To ensure all staff understand their roles in the monitoring and recording of attendance.
- To maintain and improve the attendance at Do Talk Write
- To monitor and evaluate the processes on a regular basis.
- To give clear information on expected levels of attendance at Do Talk Write.

## **Attendance Legislation**

*Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring any child of compulsory school age is in receipt of full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and also to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or education otherwise.*

*If a child who is of compulsory school age (5-16 years old) who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 and may be prosecuted.*

## **Reporting pupil absence.**

Pupil absence must be reported by 9:30am on each day of absence to Do Talk Write Alternative Provision. Parents/carers whose child attends an alternative provision must contact the provision to inform them of any absences. Due to the difference in start times for some providers it is important that parents familiarise themselves with the attendance procedures for each provision. Reporting absences can be done either by telephone or email. Failure to report absence will result in the Do Talk Write following up with telephone calls, text and home visits.

If there has been no contact made in regard to the absence, a member of Do Talk Write will conduct a Safe and Well visit. **This will be triggered on day 5 of absence.**

## **Sickness**

If your child has sickness and/or diarrhoea we would advise that they do not attend our alternative provision for 24 hours. If your child has had no further bouts of sickness/diarrhoea during the 24 hour period and you feel that your child is well enough to return please send them back to Do Talk Write. If at any time your child becomes ill we will monitor them and contact parents to gain permission to send them home if necessary. If we cannot make contact with parents the pupil will be monitored by staff, until such time contact and permission is obtained.

## **First day contact**

Do Talk Write operates a "first day contact" system. This means that if your child is absent and we have not been informed, a text/telephone call will be made to ascertain the reason for absence.

If we have attempted to make contact but received no reply and absence continues, further action will be taken by Do Talk Write.

This will include:

- Home visits
- Contacting any agencies involved
- Following a 5 day Rule.

## **The 5 Day Rule**

If a pupil is absent for 5 days and there has been no contact made with parent/ carer and home visits have been unsuccessful a referral to Child Missing in Education will be made and further welfare services may become involved.

## **Attendance Registration.**

Attendance at Do Talk Write is recorded using the Nottingham County Council electronic registration system for county learners. We inform Nottingham City Learner providers by email twice daily using the codes approved by the Dfe; this is the same for schools. All attendance is monitored by Office Manager, Michele Fowler. Any concerns raised are addressed either by letter, meeting, telephone call or home visit.

## **Persistent Absence.**

All learners are expected to achieve 95% attendance in line with the government's national expectation.

If a pupil's attendance falls to 90% or below they are at risk of becoming a potential persistent absentee. In cases of persistent absence the following procedure will be followed:

- Phone call to parent/carer from Learning Manager of the concern and stating improvement must be made.
- If no improvement in attendance made a meeting with parent/carer will be arranged to address any concerns or reasons for poor attendance.
- Targets set for the pupil to achieve within an agreed timeline.
- If there has been no significant improvement within an agreed time period and all offers of support and intervention fail, LM will meet with parent and learner and school/case worker to discuss what can be put into place to help the young person engage.

### **Home Visits**

Home visits will be conducted for a number of reasons.

- Unable to make contact with parent/carers
- Safe and well checks – any pupil that we have not managed to see or who has not attended the academy or provision for 3 days, will receive a home visit to establish contact and to confirm a visual sighting of the child. If this is unsuccessful the process will be a repeat until a visual sighting. If a pupil has not been seen for 10 days we will follow the procedure for Children Missing in Education. We work collaboratively with providers and they also conduct home visits to establish contact.
- Check addresses and contact details.

### **Leave of Absence**

If you require a leave of absence you must do so in writing either by letter, email or by completing a leave of absence request form. These can be requested from Danielle Ford at Do Talk Write. Danielle Ford will make the overall decision as whether or not to authorise any Leave of Absence during term time. All holidays must be taken during the provision's allocated holidays.

Leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances at the LM's discretion and will be decided on an individual basis.

### **Vulnerable learners**

Social workers as well as parents/carers will be contacted in the event of an absence. This primarily applies to children on an active Child Protection Plan and will be triggered on the first day of absence. Any failure to make contact will also result in a home visit.

Prior to Do Talk Write requesting legal action, parents/carers will receive at least one warning letter and will also be invited in for an attendance meeting to discuss the concerns we have regarding attendance. We aim to resolve attendance issues by being as flexible and supportive as possible with learners various needs and concerns.

## **Authorised and Unauthorised Absences**

- **Authorised Absences:**

Do Talk Write will authorise absences but this will depend on the circumstances for the absence. Authorised absence can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence. All periods of authorised absence will be determined by Do Talk Write after sufficient reason and explanation has been established.

- **Family holidays during term time:**

Parents should not normally take their child on holiday during term time. Any leave of absence should be requested by filling out a holiday request form addressed to the Headteacher. Holidays will only be authorised due to exceptional circumstances. Any holidays taken during term time, recorded as unauthorised, may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

- **Illness, medical and dental appointments:**

Any absences due to medical appointments will be authorised on the production of a medical appointment card/letter.

If a child presents as ill whilst at the Do Talk Write and is sent home due to illness their absence will be authorised. If the child fails to return to us the following day due to the illness presented on the previous day, that day will also be authorised. Any further days absence, that runs concurrent, will need to be confirmed by a doctor and a medical note/ appointment card/ prescription slip will be required as proof.

- **Days of religious observance:**

This absence is set aside for any day exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. This includes religious festivals. Do Talk Write will be sensitive to requests and parents are encouraged to give advanced notice.

- **Exclusions:**

If for any reason a child attending Do Talk Write loses their placement or the placement breaks down, the period of absence will be authorised until a suitable alternative placement can be established.

- **Family bereavements:**

In the case of a family bereavement we will be sensitive and look at each case on an individual basis and have discretion when authorising such absences.

## **CHILDREN WHO ABSCOND**

We actively work to deliver provision in a secure, safe environment, where children want to come to enjoy learning with others as part of a caring community. We recognise that it is highly unlikely that a child will try to abscond from Do Talk Write but these procedures are in place to ensure we are ready to deal with this eventuality should it occur.

### **To abscond is to 'leave without permission'**

Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in Common Law, schools and other education settings owe a duty of care towards their pupils. This duty of care requires that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that

pupils are safe and remain within the care of the school at all times throughout the school day and during school led activities. ***If a child absconds, the parent/carer (police if appropriate) and commissioning school/council will be contacted and then the risk assessment reviewed after the event.***

Where a pupil, present at registration, is found to be absent from DTW without authorisation the procedures should be as follows:

1. Tutor to inform Michele Fowler
2. MF will call parents
3. Reason for absence logged
4. persistent absence (three absences in a row) will prompt a home visit.
5. If a pupil is absent for 10 days and there has been no contact made with parent/ carer and home visits have been unsuccessful a referral to Child Missing in Education will be made and further welfare services may become involved.

### **Positive Measures to Encourage Good Attendance**

Do Talk Write will seek to encourage good attendance and punctuality with the learner through our values and mentoring. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such with positive praise and rewards for achieving attendance milestones, such as 90-100% attendance during each term and academic year.

### **Note to parents**

**As a parent you are committing an offence if you fail to ensure your child attends provision regularly, this includes your child missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being taken to court.**