



EQUIP EDUCATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Attendance Policy 2026-27

Policy owner: Equip Education and Support Services

Document source: Equip Attendance Policy, September 2026 - source text preserved

Review: September 2027 or sooner when guidance changes

Related provision: Referring-school attendance registers, Equip session records, safeguarding and CME guidance

The source document follows on the next page. Its substantive contents have been retained without editing.



Attendance Policy

Equip Education and Support Services

Updated: September 2026

Policy owner	Equip Education and Support Services
Applies to	All learners attending Equip provision and all staff involved in attendance
Approved / reviewed	September 2026
Next review	September 2027, or earlier if guidance changes
Key linked guidance	Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, updated July 2026); Children Missing Education (DfE, September 2025); Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

1. Purpose and principles

Equip recognises that regular attendance is important to safeguarding, wellbeing, continuity of learning and educational progress. Because Equip provides alternative/off-site education for learners who may remain on the roll of a commissioning or referring school, effective attendance arrangements depend on prompt information-sharing between Equip, the home/referring school, parents or carers, the local authority and other agencies where appropriate.

This policy sets out Equip's operational arrangements for recording attendance, responding to absence, supporting learners whose attendance is a concern, and escalating safeguarding concerns. It should be read alongside the commissioning school's statutory attendance responsibilities and the learner's individual placement, safeguarding and risk-management arrangements.

2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy has been updated with regard to the Department for Education's current statutory guidance, including Working Together to Improve School Attendance (updated July 2026), Children Missing Education (updated September 2025), Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, and statutory guidance on Alternative Provision.

Where a learner remains registered at a home/referring school, that school retains responsibility for its statutory admission and attendance registers and for determining the appropriate attendance code. Equip will maintain accurate session records and provide timely attendance and absence information to enable the school to fulfil those duties.

3. Attendance recording and daily information sharing

Equip will record attendance for each agreed session using its secure attendance system. The morning session begins at 9:00am and the afternoon session begins at 12:30pm. Attendance will be recorded at the start of each session, or at the agreed start time where an individual learner has a different timetable.

Records will show whether the learner is present, absent or late and, where known, the reason for absence. Equip will not independently determine the statutory authorised/unauthorised attendance code for a learner who remains on another school's roll; relevant information and evidence will be passed to the home/referring school so that it can make and record that decision.

Attendance information will be shared with the home/referring school as agreed in the placement arrangements and promptly where there is unexplained, intermittent, persistent or otherwise concerning absence.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Home/referring school

- Provide Equip with accurate learner details, agreed timetable, emergency contacts and relevant safeguarding, SEND, medical and risk information needed for safe attendance monitoring.
- Identify a named contact for receiving attendance information and responding to attendance concerns.
- Maintain the statutory admission and attendance registers where the learner remains on the school's roll, including use of the correct attendance codes.
- Follow up absence with parents/carers and work with Equip and the local authority where attendance is irregular, persistent or severe.
- Notify Equip promptly of changes to placement, timetable, authorised activities, suspension/exclusion, or other circumstances affecting attendance.

4.2 Equip

- Maintain an accurate record for every agreed session and make attendance information available to the home/referring school.
- Follow up non-arrival promptly using the contact details and safeguarding information available to Equip.
- Record reasons for absence and any supporting information provided, and pass this to the home/referring school.
- Monitor patterns of absence, lateness and non-attendance and raise concerns with the home/referring school and DSL as appropriate.
- Work with learners, families, schools and relevant professionals to identify barriers to attendance and agree reasonable support.
- Escalate safeguarding concerns without waiting for attendance thresholds where there is reason to believe a child may be at risk of harm.

5. Reporting illness and other absence

Absence reporting numbers: 0115 9754287 / 07535799668.

Parents/carers/guardians should notify Equip by 9:00am on each day that a learner is unable to attend, unless a different arrangement has been agreed. The reason will be recorded on Equip's attendance system and shared with the home/referring school.

Medical or other supporting information may be requested or shared where it is necessary and proportionate. The home/referring school will decide the statutory attendance code and whether an absence is authorised.

Where attendance falls to a concerning level, including where a learner is persistently absent (broadly, missing 10% or more of possible sessions), Equip will work with the home/referring school to review barriers, support and next steps. Concerns will be considered in context; action will not wait for a numerical threshold where safeguarding or welfare concerns are present.

6. Unexplained absence and welfare follow-up

If a learner expected at Equip has not arrived and no satisfactory explanation is known, Equip will check the attendance record and available messages and will make reasonable attempts to contact the parent/carer and, where appropriate, the learner.

If contact cannot be made, Equip will notify the home/referring school in line with the agreed attendance protocol. The response will be proportionate to the learner's age, vulnerability, known risks and circumstances. This may include a welfare/home visit where this is appropriate, safe, agreed within local procedures and undertaken by suitably authorised staff.

The DSL must be informed promptly where absence is unusual, unexplained or associated with safeguarding concerns. Children's social care, police or other agencies will be contacted where the circumstances indicate that this is necessary to safeguard the child.

7. Leaving the provision without permission / missing during the day

If a learner who has attended Equip leaves the provision without permission or cannot be located when expected, staff will treat this first as a safeguarding and welfare matter. Staff will establish when and where the learner was last seen, check the immediate environment where safe to do so, alert management/DSL, and follow the learner's risk assessment and missing/absconding procedure.

Parents/carers and the home/referring school will be informed as soon as practicable. Police will be contacted where the learner is missing and there is a risk to safety, their whereabouts are unknown in circumstances of concern, or police assistance is otherwise required. Emergency services will be contacted immediately where there is an immediate danger.

The incident and actions taken will be recorded on CPOMS or the relevant safeguarding system. On return, the learner will be offered a proportionate, supportive discussion to understand what happened, identify risks or unmet needs, and agree steps to reduce recurrence. The learner's risk assessment and support plan will be reviewed.

Any temporary restriction on off-site activities, trips or independent movement will be based on an individual risk assessment and safeguarding need, reviewed regularly, and discussed with the learner and parent/carer where appropriate. It will not be used simply as a punitive response to absence.

8. Children missing education (CME)

A child is not classed as 'children missing education' simply because they have been absent for 10 days. Under current DfE statutory guidance, CME generally refers to a child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise. A pupil who remains registered at a school but is persistently or severely absent is not, by that fact alone, CME.

If Equip becomes aware that a learner may no longer be on a school roll, their educational placement or whereabouts are unclear, or there is reason to believe they are not receiving suitable education, Equip will promptly inform the home/referring school and/or the relevant local authority so that the appropriate CME enquiries can be made.

Where a registered learner has prolonged or repeated absence, Equip will continue to share information with the home/referring school and DSL and support the school's/local authority's attendance and safeguarding processes. If there is reason to suspect harm, safeguarding action will be taken immediately and will not be delayed by CME or attendance procedures.

9. Supporting improved attendance

Equip's approach will be supportive, child-centred and responsive to individual need. Staff will seek to understand barriers to attendance, which may include health, SEND, anxiety, transport, family circumstances, relationships, safeguarding concerns or difficulties with the placement.

- Listen to the learner and parent/carers and identify barriers early.
- Work with the home/referring school and relevant professionals to agree practical support and realistic next steps.
- Consider reasonable adjustments and SEND needs when planning attendance support.
- Review attendance patterns regularly and recognise improvement.
- Use safeguarding and multi-agency pathways where attendance concerns indicate wider welfare or safety issues.

10. Information sharing, recording and confidentiality

Attendance and safeguarding information will be recorded accurately, factually and promptly. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis in accordance with safeguarding duties, data protection requirements and Equip's information-sharing procedures. Safeguarding information may be shared without consent where this is necessary and lawful to protect a child from harm.

11. Monitoring and review

Management and the DSL will monitor the operation of this policy and review attendance concerns through appropriate case, safeguarding and commissioning arrangements. This policy will be

reviewed at least annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, local procedures or Equip's operating arrangements change.

12. Related guidance

- Department for Education - Working Together to Improve School Attendance (statutory guidance, updated 9 July 2026).
- Department for Education - Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools (updated 8 September 2025).
- Department for Education - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026).
- Department for Education - Alternative Provision: statutory guidance (updated 5 February 2025).
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Equip Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy, Missing/Absconding Procedure, SEND Policy, Behaviour Policy and Data Protection / Information Sharing procedures, as applicable.

Appendix A - Key updates made in September 2026

This revision retains the practical arrangements in the previous policy but updates the legal and safeguarding language. In particular:

- The 2008 attendance leaflet reference has been replaced by current DfE statutory attendance guidance.
- The statement that a learner automatically becomes 'missing in education' after 10 days' absence has been removed and replaced with the current statutory CME definition.
- The policy now distinguishes Equip's session records from the home/referring school's statutory attendance register and coding responsibilities.
- Automatic police reporting for every incident of leaving provision has been replaced with a risk-based safeguarding response.
- Attendance concerns are framed around early support and barriers to attendance, with persistent absence recognised as missing 10% or more of possible sessions.
- Safeguarding escalation is explicit: action is based on risk and does not wait for a fixed number of absent days.