



# Little Gate Attendance and Missing Persons Policy

Date: June 2023

Review Date: June 2024

## **INTRODUCTION**

Little Gate Farm is a registered charity in England and Wales (1153584).

## **SCOPE**

Unless expressly stated to the contrary any reference to Little Gate, Little Gate Farm or the Charity should be treated as including Little Gate College, and any reference to client/participant/work trainees/child should be treated as including a Student of Little Gate College, or a child participating on our Alternative Provision offer or the Young Ranger Project.

## **AIM**

Little Gate believes that children and young people cannot achieve their full academic potential if they do not regularly attend their classroom or Little Gate programmes. Poor attendance can be one of the main signs of disengagement, impact on welfare and mental health and may be an indication of a safeguarding concern. The aim of this policy is to establish a positive culture across Little Gate.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Children and young people with SEND can often require different approaches to access education, but the need for good attendance remains a priority.

Little Gate will:

- Ensure everyone is listened to, show respect for one another and that Little Gate is a safe and secure place in which to learn and work
- Recognise excellent time keeping and attendance
- Ensure strategies are in place to reduce poor attendance and/or behaviour
- Support those whose attendance deteriorates because of bereavement, abuse, or social/emotional issues
- Consistently apply consequences for unacceptable behaviour

Due regard is paid to equal opportunities legislation. Please see the separate Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy.

## **DEFINITION**

Attendance is the time spent with Little Gate in Alternative Provision or at the College on a study programme. This may include timetabled external or community visits or work placement activity.

The College academic year comprises three terms with half term holiday periods and a longer break across the summer between academic years. All children and young people are expected to attend all their timetabled activities. Parents/Carers are not expected to take their child out of these activities during term time. This will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Unless prior agreement has been made, children and young people who arrive late for a timetabled session will be marked as late on the register. If this occurs on a regular basis it will be challenged, and a decision made on possible strategies and interventions.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

As far as possible, Parent / Carer should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of timetabled hours.

Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to Little Gate and the absence can be authorised. Children and young people must attend their timetabled sessions before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES**

Parent / Carer must inform the College or Alternative Provision in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

## **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

A child/young person may be unable to attend because:

- The site is fully or partially closed due to an Act of God or inclement weather
- Transport provided by Little Gate, or the Local Authority is not available and Little Gate is not within walking distance

- There has been widespread disruption to travel services or a traffic incident that has prevented attendance.

## **YOUNG CARERS**

Little Gate understands the difficulties young carers face and will endeavour to identify and provide support to young carers at the earliest opportunity from joining, as well as throughout their time with us.

Little Gate takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate. As part of the enrolment process, we will, in discussion with the home local authority, consider whether a young carer will be able to complete their studies.

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

Parent/Carer/young people must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details and are responsible for informing Little Gate if this information changes.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Little Gate has a service level agreement with East Sussex local authority whereby the minimum level of attendance is set at 80%. This is also good practice set by DfE/ESFA. Little Gate and East Sussex review attendance, and strategies in place to monitor and improve levels, on a regular basis.

### **Trustees**

Trustees have:

- Responsibility for ensuring this policy is written, reviewed, remains up to date and does not discriminate against any student by reason of any protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, religion, sex, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Receive a bi-monthly report on attendance and review any complaints about this policy

### **CEO**

The CEO is responsible for:

- the implementation of this policy and associated procedures, and that they are implemented fairly and consistently
- ensure any changes to this policy are agreed by the Board, published on the website, and communicated to children, young people, parent/carers and staff
- Ensuring a bi-monthly report on attendance is provided to Trustees
- Staff training in relation to the implementation of this policy and associated procedure and strategies for support and intervention

### **Head of College and Head of Farm**

- Reviewing the attendance registers on a weekly basis, identifying any areas of concern that have not been actioned.

## **Staff**

Staff are responsible for:

- Reading this policy and keeping up to date with any changes
- Modelling good attendance behaviour
- Following, and ensuring children and young people understand and follow this policy
- Implementing this policy fairly and consistently
- Supporting children and young people with poor attendance
- Recording attendance and absence on CPOMS
- Ensuring attendance at work placements has taken place
- Sharing the attendance register with the Head of College/Head of Farm on a weekly basis.

## **Parent/Carers**

Parent/carers can help their child by:

- Ensuring they attend Little Gate regularly, are appropriately dressed and equipped, have acceptable behaviour and are aware of the rules and procedures
- Taking an interest in, and helping them with their studies and tasks
- Attending open evenings and celebration events
- Contacting Little Gate where they believe their child is showing reluctance to attend and working with us to discuss appropriate support and interventions
- Arranging medical appointments outside of the educational day wherever possible
- Seeking Little Gate's permission to attend a religious festival or special event well in advance.

## **Young People**

Young people at Little Gate College are responsible for:

- Their own attendance and punctuality at college, work placements or external activities in accordance with their signed learner agreement.

## **STAFF TRAINING**

Support Staff will receive training on attendance as part of their induction to Little Gate. Where there is poor unexplained attendance, the Head of College/Head of Farm will ensure that staff work with children, young people, and their parent/carers to identify strategies for support and intervention.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

We will monitor attendance regularly and follow up with communications to the young people aged over 18 or parents/carers for those under the age of 18. This will give an opportunity to discuss the situation and look at how we can help.

Some trips and events are a privilege and, where attendance drops below 90%, these privileges may be taken away. Our newsletters remind parent/carers of the importance of good attendance.

Any cause for concern will be communicated to parent/carers as outlined below. Attendance levels will also be routinely discussed as part of termly and annual reviews.

Any intervention strategies put in place will be reviewed and reported on each half term. Where Little Gate is unable to improve attendance a meeting will take place between Little Gate, the local authority, the parent/carer and where appropriate the child and young person. This may result in ceasing the provision in place at Little Gate.

## **SUPPORT**

Where a child or young person is absent due to extended illness, Little Gate, or the Local Authority, where practical may put home education or online learning in place. This will ensure children and young people can catch up with missed work and access additional tuition. Reintegration into their studies will take place on their return.

Children and young people who have been absent for a longer period will have tailored reintegration packages of support. These will have been discussed and agreed with their parent/carers and Local Authority.

Where appropriate, staff may liaise with other agencies such as educational psychology services and social services which may be able to help in situations where there are attendance difficulties.

## **PROCEDURE**

The following procedures must be following in reporting an absence:

- Parents/carers or young people must report any absence by telephone or email, before 9am on the first day of absence
- If a Child is registered to attend the Young Ranger project, the parent/carer must report any absence by telephone or email, before 9am on the first day of absence.
- Where a child or young person is absent without notification, Little Gate will telephone the parent/carer and/or young person within 2 hours of the scheduled/timetabled start of the day
- Children and young people who remain absent for 5 days or more will be required to provide a medical certificate or appropriate evidence to support their continued absence.

Any unreported absence will be followed up within 2 hours of the scheduled start time to:

- Ascertain and record the reason for absence
- Identify whether the absence can be recorded as authorised or not
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding actions have been followed or where there is a need for further action (see Little Gate Child and Adult Safeguarding Policies).

## **MISSING PERSONS**

Children and young people are allowed to leave Little Gate during timetabled sessions, with the appropriate authorisation and permissions. The following procedures should be followed where a child or young person has gone missing without such permissions:

- The staff member who has noticed the missing person will notify the Young Ranger Leader/Head of Farm/ Head of College/CEO and DSL immediately
- Inform all appropriate staff
- Identify a staff member as a point of contact to receive and provide information
- Keep dedicated telephone lines clear of unnecessary calls
- Any staff not directly involved in the search must reassure other children and young people
- Conduct a thorough search of the premises and grounds
- If missing person has not been located within 15 minutes, contact the parent/carers
- If parent/carers have had no contact with their child, inform the Police and agencies such as local authority, and the ESFA (including social worker where missing person is a looked after child or young carer)
- Staff member to complete incident form, including all relevant information and circumstances prior to the child/young person going missing

Police may require the following information:

- When and where the person was last seen
- What they were wearing
- A recent photograph
- Why/if you think the person has absconded
- Their ability to communicate
- Any risks associated with the young person being out alone
- Places they may try to go to
- If they would willingly go off with a stranger

When the missing person is located:

- Staff will care for the child/young person and ensure they are safe and well
- Ensure child/young person understands they must not leave the premises
- Inform Parent/Carers, those contacted such as police local authority, ESFA, other agencies and/or social worker that the child/young person is found

After the incident:

- ensure all necessary documentation and on-line records relating to the incident have been completed
- the Head of College/Alternative Provision Leader/Head of Farm/Children & Young People Outdoor Learning Senior Project Leader and CEO will complete a full investigation into how the incident occurred and review policies and procedures as necessary
- if this is part of a pattern of unexplained irregular attendance/non-attendance, it may be necessary to escalate to follow safeguarding policies and procedures.

## **POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES**

This policy is subject to regular review to ensure that it remains accurate, effective, and aligned with legal and regulatory changes.

Signed by trustee	<i>Michael Hoj</i>		
Signed by CEO	<i>Ken</i>		

Reviewed by	Date	Changes made	Next review date

