



Attendance and Safeguarding Protocol for Vulnerable Students

This protocol operates alongside the Anthony Gell School Attendance Policy, Anthony Gell School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the Embark Lone Working Policy, and Derbyshire County Council Children Missing Education (CME) procedures

1. Purpose

This protocol sets out Anthony Gell School's safeguarding-led approach to attendance for students who are considered vulnerable. It establishes clear procedures for responding to absence where a student's safety, welfare or wellbeing may be at risk. Attendance is treated as both an educational priority and a safeguarding responsibility, and is integral to the school's safeguarding duties, including escalation through Children Missing Education (CME) procedures where required.

2. Scope

This protocol applies to all pupils on roll, with enhanced safeguarding arrangements for students identified as vulnerable. This includes students who are under assessment by children's social care, subject to Child in Need or Child Protection plans, children who have or have recently had a social worker, and any other students identified through safeguarding, SEND, mental health, pastoral or attendance processes.

3. Core Principles

Regular attendance is a protective factor. Unexplained, persistent or severe absence may indicate safeguarding risk. The school will adopt a child-centred, support-first approach, working in partnership with families, Derbyshire County Council Inclusion Service and other agencies to understand and remove barriers to attendance, while acting promptly where concerns about safety arise.

4. Attendance and Safeguarding Systems

The school uses Arbor as its management information system for attendance monitoring and analysis. Safeguarding concerns, decisions and actions are recorded on MyConcern. Attendance and safeguarding records will be aligned, with relevant information shared appropriately between systems to support timely and effective safeguarding responses.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and attendance responsibilities are held by a clearly defined team, ensuring strong oversight, effective information-sharing and proportionate escalation.

- Assistant Headteacher Pastoral: The Assistant Headteacher is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), has strategic oversight of attendance, and is the designated teacher for looked after children. She is responsible for safeguarding decision-making, escalation, liaison with children's social care and the local authority, and oversight of attendance concerns for vulnerable pupils.
- Family of Schools Workers: Supports the DSL in safeguarding and attendance work, undertakes family support and early help activity, contributes to attendance follow-up and planning, and may undertake home visits in line with the Embark Lone Working Policy.
- Attendance Officer: Manages day-to-day attendance processes on Arbor, monitors registers and absence data, flags concerns to pastoral and safeguarding staff, supports first-day response, and assists with CME and EHE documentation where required.
- Head of Pastoral Care: Provides leadership oversight of pastoral and attendance practice across year groups, supports Pastoral Managers with attendance and safeguarding concerns, and contributes to multi-agency planning.
- Pastoral Managers (non-teaching): Lead attendance and pastoral support within their House Groups, follow up absence, work directly with students and families to address barriers to attendance, and escalate concerns to safeguarding leads where appropriate.
- SEND department: Assist and contribute to day-to-day processes and attendance interventions. This in turn supports our most Vulnerable students where there is a SEND need. SENDCo and DTL (Director of Teaching and Learning) for this area plus the LPIP

(Lead Practitioner in inclusive Practice) liaise with DCC regarding attendance of our most vulnerable.

- All staff: Are responsible for accurate register completion, maintaining professional curiosity, and reporting attendance or safeguarding concerns promptly in line with this protocol and the school's safeguarding procedures.

6. Day 1 Response to Unforeseen Absence

Where a vulnerable student is absent without prior agreement or explanation, the following actions will be taken on the first day of absence:

- Absence is identified via Arbor and immediately flagged to attendance and safeguarding staff.
- Same-day telephone contact is made with the parent or carer to establish the reason for absence and confirm that the student is safe and well.
- Where appropriate, the school seeks to secure return for the afternoon session or agrees a supported plan for return the next school day.
- Barriers to attendance are explored and appropriate support offered.
- Where the student has a social worker or other statutory professional, they are informed of unexplained absence on the same day.
- If contact is not established or concerns remain, the matter is escalated to the DSL or DDSL on the same day.
- All actions and decisions are recorded on Arbor and MyConcern as appropriate.

7. Day 2 Response to Consecutive Absence

Where a vulnerable student is absent for a second consecutive school day without a satisfactory explanation, the school will escalate its response:

- The case is reviewed the same day by the DSL and relevant attendance and pastoral leads, considering known vulnerabilities and current risk.
- Where the student's safety has not been satisfactorily established, the school will undertake or coordinate a home visit or welfare check. Any such activity will be risk assessed and undertaken in line with the Embark Lone Working Policy.



- Relevant professionals, including the student's social worker, are updated the same day where appropriate.
- If the student's whereabouts or safety cannot be confirmed, an immediate referral is made to children's social care and/or the police.

8. Day 3 and Ongoing Absence

Where absence continues beyond two consecutive school days, or earlier where risk is assessed as high, the school will move to a formal multi-agency response.

- The case is reviewed daily by safeguarding and attendance leaders until the student is seen, returns to school, or risk is resolved.
- A multi-agency discussion or meeting is convened to agree a clear plan addressing welfare, attendance, barriers and support.
- Where a student's whereabouts cannot be confirmed or attendance concerns persist despite reasonable enquiries, escalation through Derbyshire County Council Children Missing Education (CME) procedures is undertaken proportionately.
- The school continues to liaise with the local authority to ensure compliance with CME, attendance and safeguarding processes.
- Vulnerable children's meetings are scheduled each half term and will include students whose attendance meets the criteria for a multi-agency response. Agreed support and referrals are actioned through this process.

9. Severe Absence and Individual Risk Assessment

Where a student is severely absent (attending less than 50% of possible sessions), or where attendance patterns indicate escalating safeguarding risk, the school will continue to follow the attendance policy, and consider whether an individual Attendance Support Plan is required (see Appendix a).

10. Staff Safety and Lone Working

Where attendance and safeguarding actions involve lone working activities, including home visits or welfare checks, these must be undertaken in line with the Embark Lone Working Policy. All such activities must be risk assessed, authorised by an appropriate



manager, and follow agreed communication and check-in procedures to ensure staff safety.

11. Immediate Safeguarding and CME Escalation

At any stage, staff must not delay safeguarding action where there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Immediate escalation to the DSL and referral to children's social care and/or the police will be made where a student's whereabouts are unknown or safety cannot be verified. Where appropriate, concerns will also be referred through Derbyshire County Council Children Missing Education (CME) procedures.

12. Recording, Monitoring and Review

All attendance and safeguarding actions taken under this protocol are clearly recorded and aligned across Arbor and MyConcern. CME referrals are submitted securely and documented. Attendance patterns for vulnerable pupils are reviewed regularly within safeguarding supervision and multi-agency planning. This protocol will be reviewed annually, or sooner in response to changes in statutory guidance or local authority requirements.



Attendance Support Plan

	Student details: Name, Date of Birth, Age and Year Group:
Student information	
Present at meeting	
Purpose of this plan	
Current attendance percentage	
Known barriers to attendance	
Child's View <i>(if appropriate)</i>	
Parent's View	
School's View	
Agreed Actions	
Date of next review	



Student (if appropriate)

I confirm that I agree to the above attendance improvement plan and will:

- Arrive to school on time
- Attend and arrive on time to every lesson ready to learn
- Not leave the classroom or school premises without the permission a member of staff
- Complete all homework to the expected level and hand in on time
- Speak to a member of staff if I have any problems

Signed (Student) Date.....

Parent/Carer

I/we confirm that I/we have parental responsibility and agree to the above attendance improvement plan

I agree that I will...

- Ensure my child will attend school regularly
- Ensure my child arrives to school on time
- Contact school at the earliest opportunity should my child be too ill to attend
- Ensure I update the relevant member of staff if there are any changes to my contact details
- Try where possible to make appointments outside of school hours or provide proof of the appointment when this is not possible and ensure my child attends before/after the appointment where possible.
- Contact the Attendance Officer if there are any problems or concerns
- Understand that my child’s attendance will be monitored closely and reviewed regularly
- Understand that failure to comply with the above may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service which could lead to the issuing of a Penalty Notice or prosecution

Failing to ensure regular attendance at school may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice or prosecution. Penalty Notices are set at £60 if paid by 21 days and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Any legal proceedings would relate to section 444 or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

Signed (Parent(s)/Carer(s) Date

School

Staff member.....

- I/we agree to the above attendance improvement plan
- I/we will monitor attendance, which will be reviewed regularly
- If I/we have any concerns, I or someone on my behalf will contact you, the parent/carers immediately
- I/we will keep you informed of the result of any attendance reviews