



# Orchard Therapeutic

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## Attendance Policy

### Policy Note

*For the purposes of this policy, Orchard Therapeutic Farm (OTF), Orchard Therapeutic Outreach (OTO), Orchard Therapeutic Barn (OTB) and Orchard Therapeutic Active (OTA) will together be referred to as “the Services”*

*This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors of the Services, as well as anyone representing Orchard Therapeutic Farm, Orchard Therapeutic Outreach, Orchard Therapeutic Barn and Orchard Therapeutic Active in an official capacity.*

### Policy Statement

Orchard Therapeutic Farm is committed to ensuring that every young person accessing our provision is able to attend regularly, safely and confidently, in an environment that promotes emotional wellbeing, belonging and positive outcomes. Regular attendance is fundamental to safeguarding, learning, therapeutic progress and the development of stable routines that support a young person’s wider life, health and social development.

This Attendance Policy outlines the expectations, procedures and responsibilities that underpin our approach to monitoring, supporting and improving attendance. It reflects our trauma-informed ethos, our commitment to relational practice, and our belief that every absence has a context that must be understood and met with compassion, curiosity and professional rigour.

All attendance processes at Orchard Therapeutic Farm are designed to:

- protect every young person’s welfare
- ensure no child becomes missing from education
- promote consistent engagement in learning and therapeutic activities
- reduce barriers that impact attendance, including those related to SEND, EBSA, trauma or social circumstances



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- maintain clear, timely communication with referrers, schools, local authorities and families

Attendance information is personal data and will be collected, processed and stored in line with safeguarding expectations, data protection legislation and organisational policies. Orchard Therapeutic Farm is committed to managing all personal information lawfully, securely and transparently.

This policy must be followed consistently by all staff and applies to every learner accessing our provision, without exception. Conduct that undermines the spirit, intention or safeguarding requirements of this policy will be addressed under our disciplinary procedures and may lead to further action where appropriate.

This Attendance Policy has been created to ensure that young people, families, staff, referrers and professionals understand how attendance is monitored, how concerns are identified, and the processes that support children to remain engaged with their education. At Orchard Therapeutic Farm, we are dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing and therapeutic learning environment where every young person is empowered to attend, participate and thrive.

<b>Young Person's Voice</b>	<b>How this applies to Recruitment and Vetting Policy</b>
I feel safe because adults know where I am and check on me if I'm not here.	OTF has clear daily attendance procedures, including the 9:30am safeguarding check, so adults always know where young people are and act quickly if someone is unexpectedly absent.



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<p>I know adults care about me and notice when I'm finding things hard.</p>	<p>Attendance is monitored daily and weekly, and staff use a trauma-informed approach to understand the reasons behind absence, offer support and reduce barriers.</p>
<p>I feel understood because staff talk to me and listen when I'm worried about coming in.</p>	<p>Staff work with each young person to identify triggers or anxieties around attendance and create personalised plans to help them attend at a pace that feels safe</p>
<p>I feel included because adults help me take part even when things are difficult.</p> <p>I can rely on adults to keep me safe.</p>	<p>Attendance support plans are flexible and designed around each young person's needs (SEND, EBSA, trauma, sensory, mental health) so everyone can access learning in a way that works for them.</p> <p>Daily registers, rapid presence checks and clear communication with families and referrers ensure no young person "slips through the net" and safeguarding remains the highest priority.</p>
<p>I feel respected because people know I am more than my attendance.</p>	<p>OTF avoids blame or punishment. Staff use relational practice, compassion and curiosity to understand attendance patterns and celebrate progress, however small.</p>
<p>I feel supported because adults and my family work together to help me attend.</p>	<p>OTF works closely with parents/carers, schools, social workers and the LA through daily emails, weekly trackers and multi-agency plans to support every young person.</p>

**This Policy should be read in conjunction with our:**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Missing Child / Missing From Site Procedure
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy



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- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Explore – Engage – Empower: EBSA Support Framework
- Transport Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy (GDPR)
- Induction and Training Policy

## **Why Effective attendance Matters**

Regular and consistent attendance is essential to ensuring that The Therapeutic Services fulfils its purpose as a safe, nurturing and effective provision for young people. Our ability to support their emotional development, wellbeing and learning depends on them being present, engaged and connected to the routines, relationships and experiences we provide.

Effective attendance matters because it enables us to:

- Safeguard young people by ensuring their whereabouts are known and concerns are identified without delay.
- Promote emotional safety and belonging, helping learners feel part of a predictable and supportive community.
- Deliver our therapeutic curriculum and support in a way that fosters regulation, confidence and personal growth.
- Build trusting, stable relationships that underpin all progress and engagement.
- Support young people to achieve their potential, academically, socially and vocationally.
- Reduce the risks associated with disengagement, including isolation, exploitation, and declining mental health.
- Prepare young people for their next steps, such as college, training, employment or reintegration into other provision.
- Work collaboratively with families and referrers to identify and reduce barriers to attendance.

At The Therapeutic Services, attendance is not simply a record of presence – it is a core part of our commitment to safeguarding, wellbeing and holistic support. When



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young people attend consistently, they are able to form relationships, experience success, and progress towards positive futures



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## Relevant Legislation

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments
- Children Missing Education (CME) statutory guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023 update)
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK-GDPR)
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance (DfE)
- DfE 'Improving School Attendance' Guidance

## Attendance Process

The Therapeutic Services operates a clear and robust attendance process to ensure that every young person is accounted for, safeguarded and supported from the moment our day begins. Our procedures are rooted in relational practice, therapeutic understanding and a strong safeguarding culture, and are designed to ensure that no young person is ever overlooked or allowed to disengage unnoticed.

## Daily Attendance Process

Each morning, as young people arrive from 9:00am, staff greet them warmly and record their attendance immediately. This first point of contact is important, as it allows staff not only to register the young person as present but also to gauge their emotional state, readiness to learn and overall wellbeing. Any learner who has not arrived by 9:30am is noted as not present, and their absence is flagged for immediate follow-up.



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By 9:30am each day, The Therapeutic Services undertakes a formal safeguarding attendance check. This involves contacting the parent or carer in the first instance if the young person was referred by a school, or contacting the local authority professional responsible if the young person was referred directly by an LA service. Where appropriate, parents may also be contacted for LA referrals. All telephone calls are followed by an email to the referrer to confirm the absence and to document the actions taken. Every attempt to reach the family, school or local authority is logged carefully on our LearnTrek System, and staff remain vigilant to any potential safeguarding indicators during this process.

The daily attendance register and 9:30am check ensure that we always know where each young person is, and that unexplained absence is treated as a matter of priority.

## **Weekly Attendance Process**

In addition to daily monitoring, each young person's attendance is reviewed on a weekly basis. The Services produces a detailed weekly tracker, which includes daily attendance data, authorised or unauthorised absences, punctuality, and any contextual notes relating to wellbeing or engagement. These trackers are shared with referring schools, SEN teams, social workers or commissioning officers, depending on who made the referral.

The Centre Manager reviews attendance patterns closely and identifies any emerging themes or concerns. This may include increasing anxiety, changes in family circumstances, transport difficulties, disengagement, or early signs of emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA). Where necessary, the Centre Manager will discuss concerns with the staff team and initiate supportive action, ensuring that attendance issues are addressed promptly and sensitively.

## **Escalation and Support Process**

When a young person accumulates three instances of unauthorised absence, The Therapeutic Services undertakes a more formal review. This may include contacting parents or carers to explore barriers to attendance, gathering further information from the referrer, or arranging an attendance support meeting.



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For young people displaying more significant or persistent difficulties, the Centre Manager will coordinate a multi-agency plan. These meetings may include the referrer, SEN professionals, social workers, therapeutic staff, mental health professionals or other agencies involved in the young person's life. The aim is to create a cohesive and compassionate action plan that addresses emotional, relational, environmental or practical barriers to attendance.

This support plan is usually guided by the **Explore – Engage – Empower** framework, which allows us to respond gently to distress-based avoidance, build trust, increase emotional safety and gradually re-establish positive routines.

Where escalation is required, such as when a young person cannot be located or there are concerns for their immediate safety, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is notified without delay. Depending on the circumstances, a welfare check may be requested via social care or the police, in line with safeguarding and Children Missing Education procedures.

## **Monitoring and Review**

Attendance is monitored daily, weekly and termly to ensure that patterns, safeguarding concerns and barriers to engagement are identified early. The Centre Manager oversees the operational monitoring of attendance across the Services, ensuring that all daily registers, 9:30am absence procedures, and weekly attendance trackers are completed accurately and shared with referrers.

The CEO provides strategic oversight, ensuring that attendance processes remain aligned with statutory safeguarding responsibilities, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), and Children Missing Education (CME) guidance.

This Policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if required due to updated guidance, learning from safeguarding reviews, or changes in operational practice. Any revisions will be communicated to staff and made available on the Services' shared systems



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**After reading this Policy, you should be able to:**

- understand the purpose of the Attendance Policy and how it operates within The Therapeutic Services;
- understand how attendance procedures support safeguarding, wellbeing and engagement, and how concerns are prevented, identified and managed;
- understand your individual responsibilities for taking registers, reporting absences, following the 9:30am protocol, and contributing to ongoing attendance monitoring.

**Any employee who is unsure about any aspect of this Policy should seek clarification from their Line Manager or the Centre Manager.**

## **Policy Review**

The Centre Manager is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is implemented effectively across the Services and that all daily and weekly attendance procedures are followed consistently.

The CEO will review this Policy at least once a year, or sooner if statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements or organisational needs change. This ensures that the Policy remains compliant with national expectations and reflective of best practice in supporting young people with complex needs. Any amendments will be communicated to all staff, and updated versions will be made available on the Services' shared systems.



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## **Authorisation and Signature**

This Policy is the authorised version agreed by the CEO of The Services.

All employees are expected to follow this policy and failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.



**Ludivine Parmentier**

**Chief Executive Officer**



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## **Appendix A – Attendance Process (The Services)**

### **Appendix: Attendance Process**

#### **Daily Process**

- Young people arrive from 9:00am; attendance taken immediately.
- Any learner not on site by 9.30am flagged for follow-up.
- 9:30 protocol actioned: phone calls, emails, escalation.
- Daily attendance email sent to referrer.

#### **Weekly Process**

- Attendance tracker completed for each young person.
- Centre Manager reviews concerns and patterns.
- Adjustments or support plans put in place if required.

#### **Escalation Process**

- Three unauthorised absences → attendance review.
- Persistent patterns → multi-agency meeting.
- Safeguarding concerns → DSL and statutory partners informed immediately.



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## **Safeguarding Contact Appendix B – Oxfordshire (The Services)**

### **Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

For reporting safeguarding concerns and making referrals.

**Telephone (Office Hours):** 0345 050 7666

**Emergency Out of Hours (EDT):** 0800 833 408

**Email – Children’s Social Care:** mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gov.uk

**Secure Email:** mash-secure@oxfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk

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### **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

For allegations against staff, concerns about adults in positions of trust, and advice on risk assessments following DBS disclosures.

**Telephone:** 01865 810603

**Email:** lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk

**Secure Email:** lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk.cjism.net

**LADO Duty Line Hours:** Monday–Friday, 8:30am–4:30pm

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### **Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB)**

For statutory guidance, policies, escalation procedures, training and local safeguarding thresholds.

**Website:** www.oscb.org.uk

**General Enquiries:** oscb@oxfordshire.gov.uk

**Training Support:** training@oscb.org.uk



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## **Police – Immediate Risk**

If a child is at immediate risk of harm:

**999 – Emergency**

**101 – Non-Emergency**

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## **NSPCC Helpline (for advice or reporting concerns)**

**Helpline (Professionals & Public):** 0808 800 5000

**Email:** [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

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## **The Services Internal Safeguarding Contacts**

(To be customised for Orchard Therapeutic Farm & Care Services)

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** *Kim Cook- Centre Manager*

**Deputy DSL(s):** *Alex Smith – Assistant Head of Centre*

**Safeguarding Governor:** *Ludivine Parmentier - CEO*

**Internal Email for Safeguarding Concerns:** *insert your safeguarding inbox*