



Shear Soccer Attendance Policy and Procedures

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Introduction

At Shear Soccer our ambition is for all our Alternative Education students to strive for 100% attendance, based on their attendance plan. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all young people and expect young people to be in Shear Soccer every planned session. We consider this paramount to young people achieving their full potential.

Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of young people and is an integral part of our Shear Soccer's ethos.

Some young people find it harder than others to attend sessions and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with parents/carers, young people and relevant partner agencies to remove any barriers and build strong and trusting relationships. Promoting and ensuring excellent attendance is everybody's business within our Shear Soccer and community.

Aims and ethos

Shear Soccer aims to meet its obligations with regard to attendance by ensuring every young person has access to efficient Alternative Education to which they are entitled. Shear Soccer acts early to address any patterns of irregular attendance aiming to create a culture in which the importance of good Shear Soccer attendance is understood, valued, and supported by all.

By providing a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all young people want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, all Shear Soccer staff, parents/carers, young people, and partners can work together to remove any barriers affecting attendance.

This policy sets out our Alternative Education position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents must follow to report their child's absence from Shear Soccer, to ensure their child attends Shear Soccer regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our young people and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance.

We want our young people to attend Shear Soccer for each session that's available to their agreed plan, based upon their needs, unless they are not well enough to do so. We believe that children who attend Shear Soccer regularly are more likely to feel settled in Shear Soccer, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their Alternative Education.

We will do all we can to encourage our young people to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can, for any young person who may experience any barriers preventing regular attendance.

One of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards Shear Soccer and a sense of belonging. To this end, we

strive to make our Alternative Education a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved and as part of the wider Shear Soccer community.
- Raise young people' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents, young people and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Work with external agencies where required, such as health, the LA and local organisations to support our young people, parents and Shear Soccer.
- Support young people back into Shear Soccer following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge learning gaps.
- Celebrate good and improved attendance and punctuality.

Why is Attending Shear Soccer Regularly So Important?

We believe that young people with excellent Shear Soccer attendance are more likely to reach higher standards of achievement and be at less risk of exposure to crime and other safeguarding risks.

Excellent attendance enables young people to be part of the Shear Soccer community and develop a sense of belonging. This further supports each young person's development socially, morally, and ethically, enhancing personal well-being.

Safeguarding and Attendance

Shear Soccer will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all young people as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a young person's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any young person who is absent from Shear Soccer when the Alternative Education has made all reasonable enquiries and cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the young person's welfare and safety.

Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's attendance at Shear Soccer and regular absence may seriously affect their learning.

Shear Soccer will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any young person becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include, identifying the individual needs of young people; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance.

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all young people and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and Shear Soccer that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing to enhance understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a young person or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support young people and parents by working together to address any in-Shear Soccer barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the Alternative Education control, all partners should work together to support young people and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the Alternative Education to work in conjunction with relevant partners.

Some young people face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include young people who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers such young people may face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their Alternative Education.

Shear Soccer is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other Shear Soccer's in the area, local authorities and external partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard young people. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that Shear Soccer staff require to address them. Shear Soccer therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of children in Alternative Education including on the keeping of young person registers
- processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support for young people who need it.

Authorised Absence

'Authorised absence' means that Shear Soccer has either given approval in advance for a young person of compulsory Shear Soccer age to be away from the Shear Soccer or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the Shear Soccer:

Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers following Shear Soccer's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless Shear Soccer has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If Shear Soccer is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded.

Where a young person has a high level and/or frequency of absence, Shear Soccer may require medical evidence of some description in order best support the child or young person and to be able to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, Shear Soccer will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to Shear Soccer by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

Parents should contact Shear Soccer to report an absence by email or telephone: info@shearsoccer.co.uk 07967 124 844.

If a child is absent for more than one session, the parent should contact the Shear Soccer on each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by Shear Soccer.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our Alternative Education supports young person mental health and wellbeing.

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our Shear Soccer's main tutor (Adam Shearer or Charles Shwenn – 07967124844) for further information on the support available.

Parents can also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by telephoning 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Young people taken ill during the Shear Soccer session

If a young person needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of Shear Soccer staff. In such circumstances, the young person must be collected from Shear Soccer office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No young person will be allowed to leave Shear Soccer site without parental confirmation.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should always try to make appointments outside of Shear Soccer session hours wherever possible. Where appointments during Shear Soccer times are urgent or unavoidable, the young person should only be out of Shear Soccer for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a

whole session of Shear Soccer's Alternative Education for an appointment, unless necessary, in which case Shear Soccer will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a young person must attend a medical appointment during Shear Soccer's session, they must be collected from Shear Soccer venue by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No young person will be allowed to leave Shear Soccer site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments and must be supported by providing Shear Soccer with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

Religious Observance

Shear Soccer acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the Shear Soccer community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of Shear Soccer holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, Shear Soccer will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, Shear Soccer will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Traveller Absence

Shear Soccer will authorise the absence of a Traveller young person of no fixed abode who is unable to attend Shear Soccer because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. Shear Soccer will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let Shear Soccer know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend Alternative Education elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at Shear Soccer and attend as all other peers. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend Shear Soccer regularly.

Suspensions

If Shear Soccer decides to send a young person home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion.

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the director.

Shear Soccer will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the young person is a Child in Care, Shear Soccer will notify the young person's carer and social worker. In other instances, where a young person is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, Shear Soccer will also inform their allocated social worker.

The young person must be collected from Shear Soccer venue by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No young person will be allowed to leave Shear Soccer's Alternative Education site without parental confirmation.

First Day of Absence Response

All parents and carers must provide contact information and secondary emergency contact information for each child who registers to attend Shear Soccer's Alternative Education.

For example, Children in Care; children subject to Child Protection Plans; children open to Social Care as a Child in Need; children who have previously been reported missing; primary aged young people who make their own way to Shear Soccer.

Parents will be asked to supply details of **at least three** people who can be contacted in an emergency, and these details will be reviewed on a regular basis through Shear Soccer's website.

If Shear Soccer is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided and is concerned for the welfare and safety of a young person, we may request a welfare check from the police.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a Shear Soccer has not been given a reason or is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a young person is absent from Shear Soccer without the permission of Shear Soccer. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it remains Shear Soccer's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Young people who arrive at Shear Soccer too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by Shear Soccer)
- In the case of term time leave - if a young person is kept away from Shear Soccer longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised