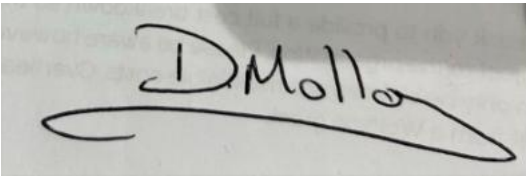





## First **Star** Scholars **UK** Attendance Policy Document

<b>Date of Last Review</b>	<b>31/10/2025</b>
<b>Review Cycle</b>	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Date (Month/Year) of Next Review</b>	<b>10/2026</b>
<b>Date Policy was First Ratified</b>	<b>31/10/2024</b>
<b>Named Lead for Writing/Review</b>	<b>Ian Wyles</b>
<b>Signed: Diarmuid Molloy</b>  <b>CEO</b>	<b>Date</b> 31/10/31  <b>Date</b> 31/10/31
<b>Signed: Robert Gratton</b>  <b>FSSUK Board of Trustees – Chair</b>	



## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 First Star Scholars UK recognises that consistent attendance and punctuality are critical for safeguarding, programme effectiveness, participants' wellbeing and learning outcomes.
- 1.2 In line with DfE expectations, the Charity aims to build a culture that values attendance and has clear policies, accurate registers and further support for those at risk of poor attendance.
- 1.3 This policy sets out the standards, responsibilities and procedures for attendance, lacking which the Charity may not meet statutory or funding requirements.
- 1.4 The Charity is committed to equity, inclusion and making reasonable adjustments when needed (e.g., for learners with SEND, health conditions, caring responsibilities) so that attendance expectations are fair.
- 1.5 This policy should be read alongside other relevant policies (e.g., safeguarding, SEND/inclusion policy, staff code of conduct, volunteer policy).

## **2. Definitions & Attendance Codes**

- 2.1 Attendance means the individual being present and ready to engage at the scheduled start of a session/activity and remaining (or appropriately excused) for the session.
- 2.2 Punctuality means arriving on time and being prepared for the session.
- 2.3 Register / Attendance Log: The record of attendance at each session/activity, reflecting whether individuals are present, absent, late. The DfE guidance requires registers twice a day (morning and afternoon) in school settings.
- 2.4 The DfE uses specific attendance and absence codes (e.g., "/", "\", "L", "C", "X", etc) to record each session and to identify whether a session counts as possible attendance, or absence, or not required.
- 2.5 Although the Charity is not a school, it must adopt records consistent with the statutory framework where relevant (especially for programme participants of compulsory school-age or where funders require DfE-compatible data).
- 2.6 Possible attendance session: A session in which the individual is expected to attend (unless previously authorised otherwise).
- 2.7 Unauthorised absence: An absence which the Charity has not approved or for which no valid reason has been provided.

2.8 Persistent absence: In a school context, the DfE defines this as missing 10% or more of possible sessions.

The Charity will monitor similar thresholds for participants as appropriate.

2.9 Severe absence: Missing 50% or more of possible sessions.

### **3. Policy Principles & Statutory Requirements**

3.1 The Charity will treat attendance as a key priority: building positive relationships, removing barriers, working collaboratively with families/caregivers, and exploring support early.

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3.2 We will maintain accurate, timely attendance registers using codes aligned with DfE standards (see section 2).

3.3 The Charity will analyse attendance data regularly to identify individuals or cohorts at risk of poor attendance or disengagement, and will intervene early.

3.4 The Charity will respect its duty of safeguarding: unexplained or frequent absence may indicate welfare or risk concerns, and we will act accordingly.

3.5 The Charity's inclusion and SEND responsibilities mean that we will make reasonable adjustments to support attendance (e.g., flexible timing, transport support, remote participation where justified) while recognising that this does not mean attendance expectations can be abandoned without assessment.

3.6 The Charity will be transparent with participants, families and staff about attendance expectations, consequences of poor attendance and support available.

3.7 We will apply this policy fairly and consistently, ensuring compliance with equality legislation (e.g., the Equality Act 2010).

### **4. Roles & Responsibilities**

4.1 Board / Trustees:

- Ensure that the Charity has this attendance policy and effective procedures, monitoring its implementation.
- Review attendance data at a governance level and ensure appropriate support and resources are in place.

4.2 Senior Leadership / Programme Lead:

- Oversee implementation of this policy across programmes.
- Ensure registers/attendance logs are maintained, codes applied correctly, and data analysed.
- Ensure staff/volunteers receive appropriate training on attendance monitoring.

#### 4.3 Staff / Volunteer Co-ordinator:

- Communicate attendance expectations at induction and in role descriptions.
- Maintain and review attendance registers/logs for their cohort.
- Follow up promptly on unexplained absence or lateness, liaise with individuals/families.
- Escalate attendance concerns as per the staging process (see section 7).

#### 4.4 Staff / Volunteers / Participants:

- Meet attendance and punctuality expectations as set out in role or programme agreement.
- Notify the relevant lead as soon as possible (and before a session where feasible) if they will be late or absent, providing reason and expected return time.
- Engage with support processes if attendance issues arise.

#### 4.5 Parents/Guardians (where participants are under 18):

- Encourage and support the participant's attendance, ensuring they arrive on time and notifying the Charity if absence or lateness is anticipated.
- Engage constructively with the Charity when attendance concerns are raised.

## 5. Attendance Expectations & Recording

### 5.1 Attendance and registration

- At the beginning of each morning and each afternoon session, the register/attendance log will be taken. Where sessions are single block, then at the start and mid-session or as defined in the programme.
- Each person will be marked as one of: present/punctual; late (but before the register closes); absent (with or without authorisation) in line with the codes described.

### 5.2 Punctuality

- Participants and staff are expected to arrive ready and on time. Late arrival disrupts both the individual's experience and that of others.
- If an individual knows they will be late, they must notify the lead as soon as possible.
- Persistent lateness will be treated as a form of attendance concern and may trigger intervention.

### 5.3 Absence notification

- If unable to attend a scheduled session, the individual (or parent/guardian for a minor) must contact the lead by [preferred method e.g., phone/email] before the start of the session wherever possible, giving reason and expected return date/time.
- For unanticipated absence, notification should be as soon as reasonably practicable.

5.4 Authorised absences: The Charity may authorise absence for valid reasons such as: illness (including physical or mental health), medical or dental appointment (which cannot be scheduled outside session times), unavoidable transport failure, caring responsibilities, agreed part-time timetable (as a temporary measure) with written agreement.

5.5 Unauthorised absences: These include absence without notification, refusal to attend, non-attendance for a reason not accepted by the Charity, or lateness beyond an agreed threshold without valid reason.

5.6 Registers/Logs: The register will record codes that distinguish between attendance, authorised absence, unauthorised absence and non-required attendance (for non-compulsory sessions or exceptional circumstances). The Charity will apply the DfE registration codes where appropriate (see Appendix A).

## 6. Monitoring & Data Management

6.1 The Charity will maintain attendance records securely, in line with GDPR/data-protection requirements.

6.2 The Charity will review attendance data at least termly (and more frequently if needed) to:

- Identify individuals with attendance below expectation.
- Recognise patterns/trends of absence or lateness (for example same day each week, particular sessions).
- Examine whether certain cohorts (e.g., participants with SEND, health conditions, certain programmes) have lower attendance and explore causes/support.

6.3 Where relevant, the Charity will use thresholds similar to those in school settings: e.g., persistent absence (10% or more of possible sessions missed) and severe absence (50% or more) to identify high-risk cases.

6.4 The Charity will use data to target support, not only sanctions, and will periodically evaluate whether the attendance strategy is effective.

6.5 The Charity will retain attendance logs for a period in line with its document retention policy or funder requirements, and ensure confidentiality of personal data.

## 7. Intervention, Support & Consequences

7.1 The Charity uses a staged approach to respond when attendance falls below expectation, or absence/lateness is unexplained or persistent:

#### Stage 1 – Early informal review and support

- The Lead/Co-ordinator meets with the individual (and parent/guardian if relevant) to discuss attendance, identify barriers, and explore support or reasonable adjustments.
- Agree a short-term action plan with attendance targets and review date.

#### Stage 2 – Formal attendance meeting

- If attendance does not improve, a formal meeting is held, where attendance targets and timescales are made clear; possible consequences are explained (e.g., removal from programme, volunteer role termination, or other contract consequences) depending on the person's role.
- Document the meeting and plan.

#### Stage 3 – Final review/decision

If attendance remains below expectation or no improvement despite support, the Charity may make the decision to withdraw the role, end the participation agreement or take contractual/volunteer review action, in line with employment/volunteer agreements and safeguarding considerations.

#### 7.2 Support may include:

- Adjusted timetable, flexible start times, transport support, remote participation (where justified).
- Liaison with external services (health, social care, local authority) if appropriate.
- Regular check-ins with the individual/family to monitor progress.

7.3 Safeguarding: If a participant's absence is unexplained and raises a safeguarding concern (e.g., repeated no-shows, vulnerable participant), the Charity's safeguarding policy will be triggered and the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will act per protocol.

7.4 Recognition & positive reinforcement: The Charity will recognise good attendance/punctuality (e.g., certificates, acknowledgment) to encourage the culture of attendance.

7.5 Legal/funder compliance: Although the Charity is not a school, where funder, local authority or regulatory requirements exist regarding attendance, or where participants are of compulsory school-age, the Charity will comply with statutory expectations around intervention (including the possibility of legal intervention via local authority where relevant).

#### 8. Leave, Holidays & Non-attendance by Choice

8.1 Requests for leave from scheduled sessions (e.g., holidays, family events) should be submitted in advance to the Lead/Coordinator, explaining reason and duration.

8.2 Leave will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, and the Charity will consider the impact on the individual's progress, role continuity and programme value. The DfE guidance emphasises that leave should not be granted routinely for non-essential reasons.

8.3 If leave is granted, it should be recorded using the appropriate code (e.g., C – “exceptional circumstances” or C1/C2 if applicable).

8.4 Non-attendance by choice without approval (e.g., family holiday during scheduled sessions without authorisation) will be unauthorised and may trigger the intervention procedure.

8.5 For part-time timetables (for example for participants with health or SEND needs), the Charity will only agree these when clearly justified, temporary, reviewed regularly and recorded (code C2) in line with DfE expectations.

## 9. Reasonable Adjustments & Special Circumstances

9.1 The Charity recognises that some individuals face additional barriers to attendance (e.g., disability, health condition, caring role, transport issues). We will engage proactively with the individual and/or family to identify and implement reasonable adjustments.

9.2 When adjustments are made, the Charity will monitor their impact, review regularly, and only continue them when they support improved attendance outcomes.

9.3 Where despite reasonable adjustments attendance remains poor, the Charity may still apply the intervention stages, whilst ensuring fair treatment and compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

9.4 In line with DfE guidance, the Charity will be particularly mindful of those absent due to physical or mental health issues, or SEND, and will provide additional support rather than default to punitive measures.

## 10. Data Protection & Confidentiality

10.1 Attendance records and associated personal data will be handled in accordance with the Charity's Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR/DPA requirements.

10.2 Access to individual attendance data will be restricted to those with a legitimate role (e.g., programme lead, attendance co-ordinator).

10.3 Aggregated and anonymised data may be used by the Charity for monitoring, improvement planning and funder reporting.

10.4 The Charity will securely archive or dispose of attendance records in line with its retention schedule and legal/funder obligations.

## 11. Review & Policy Maintenance

11.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every [insert interval: e.g., 2 years] or sooner if there is a change in legislation, significant change in the Charity's operations, or following an audit of attendance practices.

11.2 The review will consider attendance data, effectiveness of interventions, feedback from participants/staff, and whether adjustments or enhancements are required.

11.3 Any changes to this policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees and communicated to all relevant stakeholders (staff, volunteers, participants, parents/guardians).

## 12. Appendix A: Attendance / Absence Codes (adapted from DfE)

Below are key codes used by the DfE and which the Charity will adopt where appropriate. Please note this is a summary; the full list of DfE codes can be found in the "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" guidance and updated annual lists.

Code	Meaning	Counts as "possible attendance"??*
/	Present (morning)	Yes
\	Present (afternoon)	Yes
L	Late before register closed	Yes
B	Approved educational activity (off site)	Yes
P	Approved sporting activity	Yes
V	Educational visit or trip	Yes
W	Work experience (as arranged)	Yes
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances (authorised)	No
C1	Leave of absence for regulated performance/ employment abroad	No
C2	Leave of absence for part-time timetable (agreed)	No
I	Illness Yes (authorised absence)	Yes
M	Medical/ Dental appointments	No
R	Religious observance	No
S	Study leave	No
T	Travellers absence (where applicable)	No
G	Holiday not agreed by head/organisation (unauthorised)	No
N	No reason yet given for absence (must be resolved within 5 days)	No
O	Other unauthorised absence	No
U	Late after register closed (unauthorised)	No
X	Non-compulsory school-age absence / attendance not required	Not counted
Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6, Y7	Unable to attend due to specific reasons (transport/unexpected closure/detention/public health/unavoidable cause)	Not counted
K	Attending education provision by local authority	Yes
Q	Unable to attend because of access arrangements (LA fail)	No

“Yes” means the session counts as possible attendance for monitoring and absence calculations; “No” means it does not count as a present session for attendance.

**Version Control - Approval and Review**

Version No.	Approved by	Approval Date	Main Change	Review Period
1	DMO	31/10/31	N/A	Annually