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**REACH Equine Therapy and Learning Centre Attendance Policy and guidance**

**Purpose**
This policy is designed to ensure consistency and fairness in managing attendance at REACH Equine Therapy and Learning Centre. Regular attendance is vital for both therapeutic progress and the successful learning experience of all participants.

**Scope**
This policy applies to all participants, including clients, students, and any other individuals enrolled in courses or therapy sessions provided by REACH.

**1. Attendance Expectations**

* **Consistency is Key:** Regular attendance is encouraged to ensure continued progress in therapeutic or educational programs. Missing multiple sessions can hinder progress and may require reassessment of the participant's goals.
* **Session Punctuality:** Clients and students are expected to arrive on time for each scheduled session. Late arrivals may result in a reduced session time, depending on availability.
* **Preparedness:** Participants should come prepared for each session (appropriate clothing, shoes, and any necessary equipment).

**2. Absence Reporting**

* **Notification:** Participants must notify REACH at least **48 hours in advance** if they are unable to attend a scheduled session. This notification should be made via phone or email.
* **Emergencies:** In case of an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, REACH should be notified as soon as possible, preferably before the session start time.

**3. Absence Consequences**

* **Unexcused Absences:** Repeated unexcused absences (more than four in a row) may result in a review of the participant's continued involvement in the programme.
* **Withdrawal:** After four consecutive missed sessions without notice, the participant may be removed from the programme and placed on a waitlist.

**4. Cancellations by REACH**

* REACH reserves the right to cancel or reschedule sessions due to weather conditions, emergencies, or coach/facilitator availability. In such cases, participants will be notified as early as possible, and a makeup session will be offered.

**5. Participant Behaviour and Attendance**

* **Respect for Animals and Staff:** Participants should respect the animals and staff at all times. Failure to adhere to appropriate behaviour standards may lead to suspension or removal from the program.
* **Impact of Attendance on Progress:** Participants are encouraged to discuss any challenges related to attendance (such as personal or health issues) with their coach/facilitator or therapist so that an individualised plan can be made to accommodate their needs.

**6. Special Considerations**

* **Medical or Personal Issues:** If a participant is unable to attend due to medical or personal reasons, REACH is committed to working with them to create a flexible plan. Documentation may be required for extended absences.
* **Seasonal or Weather-related Changes:** During certain weather conditions, such as severe storms, sessions may be cancelled for safety. Every effort will be made to notify participants in advance.

**7. Communication**

* Participants are encouraged to maintain open lines of communication with REACH staff regarding any attendance issues, scheduling conflicts, or concerns that may affect their participation.

**8. Agreement**
By enrolling in a program at REACH Equine Therapy and Learning Centre, participants (or their guardians) agree to adhere to the guidelines and expectations set forth in this attendance policy.

**Contact Information:**
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact us at reach.hippotherapy@gmail.com or 07519 169913.

Guidance below

**Guidance with regards to attendance training for Alternative Education**

Attendance training for staff in an Alternative Provision (AP) focuses on understanding attendance expectations, identifying barriers to attendance, and implementing strategies to improve engagement. The training typically covers the following areas:

1. **Understanding Attendance in Alternative Provision**

* Legal framework: Education Act 1996, Children Missing Education (CME) guidance, and Ofsted expectations.
* The role of AP in ensuring attendance and engagement.
* The impact of poor attendance on safeguarding, attainment, and well-being.

2. **Attendance Policies and Procedures**

* The AP’s attendance policy and how it aligns with local authority requirements.
* Expectations for staff in recording, monitoring, and reporting attendance.
* The importance of accurate registers and the use of attendance codes (e.g., for authorised absence, for unauthorised).
* Procedures for reporting concerns about persistent absence.

3. **Barriers to Attendance in Alternative Provision**

* Understanding the needs of students in AP (e.g., SEND, SEMH, trauma, previous school exclusions).
* Identifying individual risk factors, such as:
* Mental health issues.
* Family difficulties (e.g., neglect, domestic abuse).
* Behavioural challenges or disengagement from education.
* Transport or financial difficulties.

4. **Strategies to Improve Attendance**

* Building positive relationships with students and families.
* Strategies to engage and motivate learners (personalised timetables, mentoring, alternative curriculum).
* Early intervention approaches, such as:
* Home visits and welfare checks.
* Working with external agencies (e.g., social care, CAMHS, Early Help).
* Reward schemes and incentives.

5. **Safeguarding and Attendance**

* The link between non-attendance and safeguarding risks.
* How to escalate concerns (e.g., reporting to DSL, making a Children Missing Education (CME) referral).
* Recognising potential exploitation risks (e.g., county lines, criminal exploitation).

6. **Legal Responsibilities and Enforcement**

* Role of the local authority Education Welfare Service.
* Understanding penalty notices and legal interventions for persistent non-attendance.