**HorseWorld Discovery Attendance Policy**

Discovery provides a safe, nurturing and welcoming environment, in which every young person feels valued, loved and respected as a unique learner.

In order for young people who are referred to Discovery to gain the greatest benefit from their time on the programme, it is important that they attend their booked sessions regularly and on time, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We help and support children and young people to attend regularly and this policy sets out how we achieve this and how we report absences to the referring organisation.

Many of the young people who attend Discovery will have fallen into patterns of absence from mainstream school/their education setting. Discovery is often vital in helping to mend that pattern, so we work hard with referrers and/or parents/carers to ensure that young people are able to attend their sessions.

Supporting attendance and reporting absence is an important part of Safeguarding Children and Young People. Unreported or extended absences may mean young people are at risk of harm.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) states:

*Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school or college’s response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children’s social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.*

Signature: Date: Review date:

**Discovery Absence Procedure**

In order to support attendance Discovery staff **must:**

* Complete the Discovery Attendance sheets at the start of each session
* Report a young person’s absence to the referring school organisation as a matter of priority
* Have conversations with the young person about their absence upon their return to gain an understanding of what the reasons for the absence were and to understand any difficulties they are having/any barriers to attendance.
* Document any concerns re: absence, following HorseWorld’s Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
* Work with the young person and the referring organisation to minimise any barriers to attendance e.g. we might work with a young person to find ways we can reduce any anxiety around attending; where possible we might work with a school to find the best timeslot for the young person to attend Discovery that will maximise attendance; we might need to feedback difficulties with transport to the referring agency.
* This will include using Thrive Online to create an individualised action plan tailored to the students individual needs.

If a young person is absent from Discovery, **the Discovery Facilitator** who works with that young person **must**:

* **Make a phone call to the referring organisation to report the absence 15mins after the start time of the young person’s session** i.e. we will wait 15minutes to allow for transport delay and after that time, we will class the student as absent and make the phone call.
* **Report the absence to the referring organisation even when a parent/carer has reported their child absent to us**. It is our duty to ensure that the referring organisation are aware of the absence.
* **Record in the session notes that the young person was absent and detail who the absence was reported to and/or by, along with any reasons given**.
* Ensure **two consecutive absences** are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (2023-2024 SP and KF).

In addition, we will work with referring organisations to follow their attendance monitoring procedures e.g. some organiastions phone us to gather attendance details each day the student is due in, some ask for an email to confirm attendance, some ask for an email only in the event of an absence.

Referring organisations/parents/carers must:

Telephone or email us as soon as possible please, on the day of absence

01275 893023/discovery@horseworld.org.uk