

2.8 Attendance and absence Policy

In our Pre-school we aim to provide a safe and happy environment where children's wellbeing is promoted, and children do not miss their entitlements and opportunities. At an early age, continuity and consistency are important contributors to a child's well-being and progress. We therefore recognise that good attendance promotes good outcomes for children.

Our Aim is to:

To promote good attendance and set good habits in preparation for school.

We strive to:

- To create a culture where good attendance is valued and normalised
- To value the individual child and their family
- To be socially and educationally inclusive

Rationale

Through regular attendance, children build up the secure attachments that they need for healthy development. A regular routine supports the young child to feel settled and secure. Unsettled children have higher stress levels which in turn prevent them from being able to benefit fully from the learning opportunities available.

Studies show that children who regularly attend Preschool and Early Years settings tend have better early academic attainment and social-emotional well-being than those who do not attend.

Children with good early years attendance also perform better than their peers at the end of their Reception year. Regular, and punctual attendance is paramount so that all children have full access to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Procedure

We acknowledge that children are not legally required to attend school until the term after their fifth birthday. However, nurseries and early years providers strongly encourage regular attendance because it helps children develop vital social and learning skills, establishes routines for a smooth transition to school and allows them to benefit fully from educational opportunities.

There may be a number of valid reasons why a child may be absent from a session such as appointments or holidays.

If you have child's appointments or holidays planned, we ask that you contact Pre-school as soon as possible and give adequate notice.

If advanced notice of any absences is not possible we encourage parents/ carers to contact the pre-school within one hour of the time that their child should have been attending their session and inform staff of the reason for their absence.

- If a child is absent without an explanation for a session, staff will contact parents to ascertain the reason for the absence or emergency contact.
- Children ideally should be at their setting on time for the days and hours they attend unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable.
- All absences and reasons for absence given will be recorded in our Pre-school register.

Supporting families

We understand that young children can sometimes be reluctant to attend Pre-school. This could be because they are tired or just want to stay at home with their parents/carers. In these situations, do remind them that

they will have a great time with their friends, playing and learning.

If this becomes a persistent problem, or if you have reason for concern about your child, please do communicate this with your child's key workers, so they can work with you as to how to support your child's well-being needs and better attendance.

Where children's attendance is not improving, Pre-school staff will be able to offer support, if needed e.g. implementing bedtime routines, supporting you with healthy eating, referrals to Early Help or other support agencies.

Transition

If you decide to move your child to another setting, then please inform us so we can send records to the next setting to ensure a smooth transition and so we can take them off our register.

Safeguarding

We have a duty to keep children safe in some instances poor attendance can be seen as an indicator of a safeguarding issue.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputies may have to contact their Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) if:

- A child who is expected to attend fails to arrive and no contact has been received from their parents /carer or other contacts listed.
- A child is absent for a prolonged period with no communication from parents/ carers.
- Persistent late drop off or collection without explanation.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputies or session leaders are responsible for taking prompt action to contact parents/ carers to seek an explanation for the absence and be assured that the child is safe and well.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputies or Day Leader will attempt to contact the child's parent/ carer throughout the day in order to gain information about the child's whereabouts and ensure their safety.

If no contact is made with the parents/ carers or the named contacts on the child's registration form this will be recorded as an unexplained absence.

Record keeping

Absence records are retained for at least three years, or until the next Ofsted inspection following a cohort of children moving on to school.

If at any time further information becomes known that gives cause for concern our safeguarding policies will be implemented.

Let's all work together to support attendance in the Early Years. We are here to support you and your child.

References:

Attachment theory & secure base — Bowlby's foundational work explains how secure attachment enables exploration and emotional regulation. Reference: Bowlby, J. (1969). Attachment and Loss: Vol. 1. Attachment. Basic Books.

Bolton Start Well (2025). *Attendance Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage.*

Department for Education (DfE). *Study of Early Education and Development (SEED)*.

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