

Attendance Policy

The Importance of Good Attendance

We are committed to promoting good levels of attendance to enable children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Attendance at Nursery School is non-compulsory however, if children are to settle, build relationships with their key worker and their peers and benefit from the activities and learning opportunities the nursery has to offer, good attendance is essential. At a young age continuity and consistency are important contributors to a child's well-being and progress so the school proactively promotes good attendance for all our pupils.

Regular attendance and punctuality are important because:-

- Absence and lateness affects pupils' ability to participate and benefit from the curriculum.
- Children who arrive late disrupt the routine of the nursery and can interrupt and unsettle other children
- Poor attendance and punctuality may result in a child finding it difficult to settle, to become involved and to form social relationships
- Regular attendance and punctuality helps to instil good habits and promote the development of a positive attitude towards school.

This policy has been developed in line with the DfE guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' Sept 22 and applies to the Federations maintained nursery schools.

Promoting Good Attendance

All parents are made aware of the importance of regular attendance as part of our induction process. Information about the importance of good attendance, punctuality and collecting children on time is shared with parents during the induction process.

All parents are made aware of the expectation that they inform the school by telephone if their child is going to be absent from school. If there is an unexplained absence, the school will contact parents during the nursery session to establish the reason for absence. If the child is known to Social Care they will be informed of the unauthorised absence.

Punctuality

Parents are encouraged to arrive at school promptly so that the welcome time can take place effectively. The door is closed 10 mins after the start of the nursery session to enable staff to settle their children and begin focused teaching. Parents who arrive late with their children may have to wait until staff are available to collect their child.

Parents are encouraged to collect their child on time at the end of the nursery session. Lateness causes distress for our young pupils who are left behind at the end of the session and, at the end of the morning session, leads to staff being unable to have a break of a reasonable length between nursery sessions.

Where there is a pattern of persistent lateness and other strategies to support parents have been unsuccessful, a late charge of £5.00 will be made for every fifteen minutes after the end of the nursery session.

Early Collection

We recognise that at times parents may need to request to remove their child from school before the end of the nursery session if their child needs to attend appointments or when emergencies arise and we aim to accommodate these occasional requests.

We actively discourage parents from collecting their child early from nursery on a regular basis unless parents can provide a reasonable justification for their child missing part of their education. We recognise that the end of the school day for neighbouring Primary Schools is earlier than the end of the nursery session therefore parents may need to collect early. Arrangements will be made with individual families and the decision to permit children to be collected from school early will be made at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

Recording Attendance

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. The register is taken at the beginning of each session. The register will record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible. The school provides an absence reporting facility on the School app to allow parents to report absence. Alternatively, parents can telephone the school office and leave a message on the school answer machine.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. A message will be left asking the parents to contact the school if they can't be reached.
- If the child is absent for a second day and further calls to the parents have been unsuccessful, contact will be made with the child's emergency contacts.
- The school may contact the police to carry out a welfare check if repeated attempts to contact the family and emergency contacts are unsuccessful.
- Once contact has been made with the parent and the reason for absence obtained this will be recorded.
- Continue to contact the parent/carer if the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, available from the school office. A leave of absence form is not required for medical appointments.

Leave of absence for family holidays

We recognise that many families take holidays during term time when the costs of holidays are reduced and prior to their child starting Primary school when these holidays are not permitted. To enable the school to safeguard pupils, parents are required to complete a leave of absence request form to request authorised absence.

Reducing persistent absence and severe absence

The government defines a pupil to be persistently absent if he/she is away for over 10% of school sessions and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Although attendance at Nursery school is non-compulsory, to promote good attendance, instil good habits and promote the development of a positive attitude towards school we use this definition as a guide when monitoring absence. We therefore expect children to have at least 90% attendance if they are fit and able to attend, which equates to no more than 19 absences in one school year.

Each half term we monitor the level of attendance for each child and report the levels of attendance to the child's parents. If a child's attendance drops below 80% parents will be contacted and future attendance will be closely monitored. If a child's attendance is 60% or less in any half term, the child's parents will be asked to attend a meeting. If absence levels do not improve and additional support is not effective parents may be given notice of the removal of their child's place at nursery.

Continuous absence

Paragraph 3b of regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 lists the circumstances in which a pupil who is not of compulsory school age can be removed from an admissions register. These include continuous absence for 20 school days or more, where:

- The absence was not agreed by the Head Teacher
- The Head Teacher does not have reasonable grounds to believe the child cannot attend the school through sickness or any unavoidable cause
- The Head Teacher has failed, after reasonable enquiry, to determine where the pupil is

A school can therefore legally remove a child from the roll if an absence lasting 20 or more school days is taken without consent being given for any period of this leave. If contact with parents is unsuccessful or a reasonable reason for non-attendance has not been given, parents will be informed in writing of the removal of their child's nursery place.

Approved by the Governing Board on 23rd September 2022

Last review date: 25th August 2022

Next review due by: September 2024

Appendix A: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix B - Monitoring Attendance Levels

Role of Administrator

Inform the Headteacher/Head of School if:

- Absence of five continuous days where no reason has been given and all attempts to contact the parents have failed.
- Absence of any child on the Child Protection Register on the day of absence where no reason is given or contact made

Monitor attendance by:

- During the last week of each half term print and check each child's attendance.
- Colour code each child's record using the guide below
- Ensure Headteacher/Head of School receives coded copies of attendance reports before the end of the half term.

Green	No Concern	80-100%	Acceptable level
Yellow	Risk of underachievement	60-80%	Persistent absence
Orange	Severe risk of underachievement	30-60%	Poor Levels
Red	Extreme concern	0-30%	Unacceptable – Place removed