

# **Attendance Policy**

Date: 03/01/2026

Review Date:

## **Aim of the Policy**

Our aim is to promote regular attendance and to emphasise its importance for children's learning, development, and well-being. To achieve this, the setting will:

- Foster a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment for all children.
- Create a culture that values and promotes good attendance and punctuality.
- Work collaboratively with parents and carers to identify and address any barriers to regular attendance.
- Monitoring attendance forms part of safeguarding responsibilities under the EYFS, as unexplained or irregular attendance may indicate a child may be at risk.

## **Why Attendance Is Important**

Regular attendance and punctuality help to establish positive habits from an early age. Consistent routines provide structure and predictability, enabling young children to fully benefit from the learning and development opportunities available within the setting.

Through regular attendance, children develop secure attachments with staff and peers, which are essential for healthy emotional development. Continuity and consistency help children feel settled and secure and are key contributors to their overall well-being and progress.

Children learn and develop more from birth to five years than at any other stage of life. Research demonstrates that children who attend early years settings regularly show stronger early academic outcomes and improved social and emotional well-being than those who attend irregularly. Good attendance in the early years also supports the development of positive attendance patterns for school, contributing to long-term educational success.

## **Procedure for Absence**

### **Parent/Carer Responsibility**

Parents and carers are expected to bring their child to the setting for all booked sessions unless the absence has been agreed or unavoidable, such as due to illness, emergency, or a previously agreed planned absence.

### **Reporting Absence**

If a child is unable to attend, parents/carers must inform the setting on the **first day of absence**, no later than **9:30 am**, via phone call, text message, or email, providing the reason for absence.

This aligns with the AfC Attendance Strategy for schools, which states: *“Parents and carers are expected to report their child’s absence from school on the first day of absence and to confirm the reason in writing on their child’s return to school.”*

### **Failure to Communicate**

If no explanation for absence is received, the setting will make every reasonable effort to contact the parent/carers within a set timeframe after the child’s expected arrival time. This will include phone calls, text messages, and, where necessary, contacting the named emergency contacts on the same day.

If no contact can be established and the absence remains unexplained, the situation will be monitored and escalation will be considered in line with safeguarding procedures, particularly where the absence continues or forms a pattern of concern. If appropriate, the absence will also be followed up upon the child’s return to the setting.

All attempts to contact parents/carers regarding absences, along with any actions taken, will be clearly documented.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Attendance is closely monitored, and all absences, including reasons, are accurately recorded. Frequent or prolonged absences, defined as

attendance falling below **75%**, may trigger further review. In such cases, the setting will engage with parents/carers to understand the underlying reasons and work collaboratively to identify appropriate support or actions to improve attendance.

### **Health and Well-Being Monitoring**

Attendance patterns are also reviewed in relation to children's health and well-being. Where patterns suggest possible health concerns, or during outbreaks of illness (e.g., measles), the setting will take appropriate action and ensure parents are kept fully informed.

### **Safeguarding Concerns**

Where a child has frequented unexplained absences or stops attending without notice, I will remain alert to potential safeguarding concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed and will take appropriate action, which may include seeking advice from or making referrals to external agencies.

### **Understanding Barriers to Attendance**

Occasional absence due to illness is expected; however, some children may show reluctance to attend for other reasons, such as tiredness, emotional needs, or changes at home. Where concerns arise, the setting will work sensitively with families to understand the underlying causes and provide appropriate support.

Parents/carers are encouraged to inform the setting of any changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance, behaviour, or emotional well-being, including but not limited to bereavement, separation or divorce, or incidents of domestic abuse. Sharing this information enables the setting to identify whether additional early help or support may be required.

### **Supporting Families**

Some children may require additional support to achieve good attendance, including children who are vulnerable, have medical needs, or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

We recognise that families may, at times, need extra support. Effective communication between parents/carers and the child's key person is central to this. Where appropriate, the setting may develop a

personalised attendance support plan in partnership with parents to address specific barriers.

If attendance does not improve, the setting will discuss further support options with parents, which may include guidance on bedtime routines, healthy eating, or referrals to Early Help services or other relevant support agencies.

## **Safeguarding**

All agencies working with children have a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare. Although attendance in early years provision is not statutory, poor or irregular attendance can be an important indicator of wider concerns, particularly for vulnerable children.

## **Monitoring Attendance**

- Attendance records are maintained accurately and reviewed regularly.
- Patterns of irregular or unexplained absence are identified promptly.
- Staff and managers are trained to recognise attendance concerns that may indicate safeguarding risks, including neglect or abuse.
- Any child whose attendance causes concern will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for further consideration.

## **Taking Action**

- If a child is known to be involved with Social Care, the relevant professional will be informed of the child's absence on the first day.
- Where concerning patterns of absence emerge, the issue will be escalated in line with safeguarding procedures to ensure the child's safety and well-being.

Through vigilant monitoring and multi-agency collaboration, the setting aims to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns at the earliest possible stage.

## **Funded Places**

Early education funding for 15 and 30 hours childcare is provided by the local authority and constitutes public funding. The setting has a responsibility to ensure that funded places are used appropriately and effectively.

If a funded place is consistently used for less than **75% of the booked sessions**, the setting reserves the right to withdraw the place and offer it to another family to ensure best use of public funding.

Monitoring of attendance and the use of government-funded hours may be shared with the local authority or relevant professionals as required, in line with funding agreements, data protection regulations, and safeguarding responsibilities.