



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedure

Regular attendance in an early years setting is vital for maintaining a stable and nurturing environment and is crucial to each child's educational and social development.

## **Is Attendance Compulsory?**

Although there is no legal requirement that children attend a childcare setting before the age of five, good attendance enables children to take full advantage of the learning and development opportunities available, which is key to giving children the best chance to thrive.

All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.'

*(EYFS Statutory Framework, 2024)*

Childcare providers cannot insist that children attend every session they are contracted for, and poor attendance will not be reported, as it would be for older children who are absent from school.

However, we do have a duty of care to report any safeguarding concerns to the local authority if we believe that a child's attendance or punctuality indicates that they may be at risk of harm. If childcare support funding is being utilised, it should also be noted that such funding may be withdrawn in cases of persistent absences.



## **Why is Attendance Important?**

Regular attendance helps children build trusting relationships with their carers and peers. These, in turn, help children develop good social skills and feel safe and secure, free to explore and learn.

Good attendance can also help children follow daily routines and understand behaviour boundaries, preparing them for future educational settings.

Regular attendance allows children to be included in friendship groups, take advantage of valuable learning opportunities, and may find settling in easier.

## **Why is Punctuality Important?**

Arriving at the setting promptly can support a child's understanding of time and help them to settle into daily routines. They can engage fully in planned activities alongside their peers and good time management provides stability.

Arriving at the setting part-way through a session could prevent children from missing out on activity introductions and valuable learning opportunities and may feel unsettled.

Arriving late can also impact the childcare provider and their other children, who may need to leave the setting for planned activities or to collect/drop off other children.

## **How Will Attendance and Punctuality be Monitored?**

Recording children's attendance is a requirement for childcare providers.

Providers must hold the following documentation:

A daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises, their hours of attendance, and the names of each child's key person.

*(EYFS Statutory Framework, 2024)*

The information we collect will include the exact times of arrival and departure. This information can support safeguarding practices, inform invoicing, and meet local authority requirements.



## **What Happens When the Child Returns to the Setting Following a Period of Illness?**

Upon returning to the setting following illnesses, especially contagious ones, parents/carers may be asked questions to ensure their child is fit to return and does not pose a health risk to others. In some circumstances, a doctor's note may be required.

Please see our [Illness and Infection Control Procedure](#) for further details about when a child should be kept at home due to illness or infection and when they are well enough to return.

If your child has any special requirements or needs any changes to their usual routine following an absence, parents/carers should discuss these with us before their return to ensure we can accommodate them safely.

## **What do parents/carers need to do if their child arrives later than expected?**

Children must be dropped off and picked up at agreed times wherever possible. Any changes to these times should be communicated as soon as it becomes apparent to parents/carers that there is a timing issue.

If you will unexpectedly be arriving later than your usual start time, please call ahead to let us know. In some circumstances, we may not be available at the setting to receive your child, for example, on a scheduled school run or outing. Should this be the case, you may be required to meet us at a different location or wait for us to return to the setting. No refunds will be issued for missed childcare due to lateness.

## **What would happen if a child did not arrive when expected?**

Should a child fail to arrive at the setting when expected, and we were not informed by the child's parents/carers that they would be absent the following procedure would be followed:



- The child's parents/carers would be contacted 30 minutes after the child was due to arrive.
- We will continue to attempt to make contact with parents/carers using any numbers provided. This will include directly calling and leaving written messages.
- If there is no response we will call the emergency numbers provided.
- If we cannot reach the parents/carers of the child we will inform the police to do a welfare check.

### **What would happen if a child was regularly late or absent?**

Should a child be persistently late or miss a high percentage of their scheduled sessions, we will discuss the issue with their parents/carers to support them with any barriers they face and work together to minimise any disruption for the child.

We will use our professional judgment when deciding whether attendance and punctuality are a cause for concern and will take into account factors such as the child's vulnerability, the parent's and/or carer's vulnerability, and home circumstances. Suppose we have reason to believe that a child is persistently late or absent for reasons considered a safeguarding issue. In that case, we will contact our Local Safeguarding Board to discuss our concerns and what actions might need to be taken.

We will follow our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and Procedures in all circumstances.

### **How will attendance data be used?**

All attendance records and information regarding child absences will be stored securely and kept confidential, in line with GDPR regulations.

They will only be shared with parties who have a legitimate interest, e.g., childcare staff, the local authority funding department, and the Local Safeguarding Board (where necessary).



For more information on our data practices, please see our [Confidentiality, and Data Retention Policy](#).

### **What support is available for families?**

We are keen to work with you to address any barriers to your child's attendance and punctuality. Please let us know if you require any advice or support in such matters. We will happily arrange a meeting to discuss any issues and possible solutions.

### **How do absences affect childcare support funding?**

We are responsible for ensuring that children who access early years childcare support funding at our setting are getting their full entitlement and that government funding provides value for money. As such, agreements regarding absences exist between providers and the local authority. Each local authority is responsible for deciding how many funded sessions a child can be absent from each term before funding is reclaimed from the provider. Please see our [Funding Policy](#) for further information.