



Nursery Attendance policy

Portsmouth Primary School and Early Years

**Approved by: Governing
Body**

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1. Rationale

At an early age, continuity and consistency are important contributors to a child's well-being and progress and good attendance and punctuality in the Early Years are the foundation for lifelong learning habits. Although attendance in nursery and pre-school is not statutory, every day a child attends provides valuable opportunities to develop their language, social skills, independence, and early academic foundations. Children who attend regularly are more likely to feel secure, build strong relationships with peers and adults, and make consistent progress across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

We recognise that young children may experience illness more frequently than older pupils, and we understand that families sometimes face challenges in maintaining consistent attendance. However, establishing routines of regular attendance from the beginning of a child's educational journey helps prepare them for compulsory schooling and gives them the best chance to thrive.

This policy sets out the expectations of parents, carers, and the setting in working together to promote and support good attendance. It also highlights the procedures we follow for monitoring attendance, addressing concerns, and ensuring the safeguarding of all children. By working in partnership, we aim to ensure that every child enjoys a positive early years' experience that supports both their immediate development and long-term educational success.

Aims

- To work in strong partnership with parents and carers to ensure that every child attends nursery regularly and is punctual.
 - To support families in understanding the importance of regular attendance.
 - To identify and address any barriers to children's attendance in nursery.
 - To ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met.
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2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2025 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It also follows the local authority's Children Missing Education procedures and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) health protection guidance on infection control in schools and childcare settings.

3. Expectations

Expectations below will be explained to parents as part of their child's home visit and parents will be asked to sign to say they agree to follow.

Parents/Carers should:

- Ensure children attend nursery for their booked session and arrive on time.
- Notify the setting on the first day of absence either by telephone, email or via Tapestry app, giving the reason.
- Contact the nursery if this absence is continuing i.e. later that day/session if your child will be absent the following day.
- In the case of lengthy absence keep the nursery well informed.
- Provide up-to-date contact numbers and notify us of any changes of address or contact details.
- Work with us to identify any barriers to attendance, including medical or SEND needs, so reasonable adjustments can be put in place.

The setting will:

- Record attendance daily, including each child's name, hours of attendance, and their key person.
 - Monitor patterns of absence and lateness.
 - Follow up promptly on unexplained absences (safeguarding duty).
 - Offer support to families where attendance is a concern.
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4. Procedures

Reporting absence: Parents must inform the setting by phone, Tapestry app, or email before the start of the session.

Absences may include illness, medical appointments, religious observances, exceptional family circumstances, or family holidays. While we recognise that nursery attendance is non-statutory, we strongly discourage holidays in term time as they can disrupt children's learning and routines.

Persistent absence: If a child's attendance is low or levels of punctuality are poor, the setting will meet with parents to discuss concerns and agree on a plan of support.

Unexplained absence: If a child is absent without notification, we will attempt to contact the parent/carer using the primary contact number provided. If we are unable to reach the parent/carer, we will attempt to contact the secondary emergency contact provided. All contact attempts and outcomes will be recorded in the child's attendance record. If we are unable to make contact and have concerns about the child's welfare, we will follow our safeguarding procedures.

Prolonged absence: A prolonged absence is defined as 3 consecutive sessions of absence without a valid explanation. If a child is absent for a prolonged period, we will:

- Make repeated attempts to contact parents/carers and emergency contacts.
- Send a written communication (e.g., email or letter) to the parent/carer.
- Consider a home visit, if appropriate and following internal procedures.
- Consult with our safeguarding lead if there are concerns about the child's welfare.
- Where appropriate, notify the local authority in line with Children Missing Education guidance.

5. Punctuality

Sessions begin promptly with children going into small group time; lateness can cause children to miss out on structured learning part of the session.

Parents are expected to collect their child on time at the end of sessions.

6. Illness

If your child is unwell, please keep them at home to prevent the spread of infection.

Please inform us of any contagious illnesses, such as chickenpox, measles, or COVID-19.

Children should not return to the setting until they are symptom-free or as advised by a medical professional. We follow the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance on infection control in schools and childcare settings when advising families about exclusion periods and return times.

7. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do, and attendance is a key part of keeping children safe. A child who is absent or persistently late may be at risk of harm, missing important support, or experiencing difficulties at home. For this reason, attendance and safeguarding policies must work hand-in-hand.

Unexplained absence will be followed up the same day, in line with the school's safeguarding policy.

Concerns about persistent absence may be referred to the local authority's Early Help or safeguarding teams. Where we believe a child may be missing education, we will also inform the local authority in line with statutory guidance.

8. Withdrawing your child from nursery

If parents/carers decide to move their child to another setting, they must inform us as soon as possible so that we can take them off our register. Parents/carers are required to provide 4 weeks' notice for the change in funded early education sessions. We will ensure that your child's records and Learning Journey are forwarded to the new setting that they will be attending. This is essential to support the smooth transition of your child between settings and their well-being at this time of change.