

5.12 Attendance Policy

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5.12 Attendance Policy

Policy Statement

At Miss B's Nursery, we believe that regular attendance is fundamental to children's learning, development, wellbeing and safeguarding. Consistent attendance enables children to develop secure attachments, establish routines, build friendships and make sustained progress across all areas of learning and development.

Attendance is not only an educational matter but also an important safeguarding responsibility. Patterns of poor attendance, repeated unexplained absences or sudden changes in attendance may indicate that a child or family requires additional support.

We work in close partnership with parents and carers to promote good attendance while recognising that children may occasionally be absent due to illness, family circumstances or other exceptional reasons.

Our approach is supportive rather than punitive, aiming to understand and remove barriers to attendance wherever possible.

Legislative Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (0–25 years)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR

Children's Rights

We recognise every child's right to:

- access high-quality early education;
- feel safe and secure;
- develop positive relationships;

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- receive support where attendance becomes a concern.

This reflects the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly:

- Article 3 – Best interests of the child.
- Article 18 – Parents share responsibility for children's upbringing.
- Article 28 – Right to education.
- Article 29 – Education should support children's full development.

Purpose

The aims of this policy are to:

- promote regular attendance;
- safeguard children;
- ensure children benefit fully from their nursery experience;
- support families experiencing difficulties;
- maintain accurate attendance records;
- comply with statutory safeguarding duties;
- provide a clear procedure for reporting absences;
- identify attendance concerns at an early stage.

Why Attendance Matters

Regular attendance helps children to:

- develop secure relationships with practitioners;
- establish routines and feel emotionally secure;
- build confidence and independence;
- develop friendships;
- participate fully in planned learning experiences;
- make consistent developmental progress;
- develop communication and language skills;
- prepare for school.

Irregular attendance can affect children's emotional wellbeing, confidence, learning and social development.

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Partnership with Parents

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- ensuring their child attends all booked sessions wherever possible;
- informing the nursery promptly if their child will be absent;
- notifying the nursery of illness before the session begins where reasonably possible;
- keeping emergency contact details up to date;
- informing the nursery of any significant family circumstances that may affect attendance;
- working with the nursery where attendance concerns arise.

The nursery will always approach attendance concerns with sensitivity and understanding.

Register Requirements

The nursery maintains an accurate register of attendance for every session.

The register will record:

- children's arrival time;
- departure time;
- person collecting the child;
- authorised absences;
- unauthorised absences where applicable;
- late arrivals;
- early collections.

Attendance records are retained securely in accordance with data protection legislation.

Reporting an Absence

Parents should notify the nursery as soon as possible if their child will not be attending.

Where possible, notification should be given:

- before the session begins;
- by telephone;

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- by email;
- through the nursery's approved communication system.

However, parents are asked to call the nursery to notify us of their child's absence by 10am; otherwise, the nursery will make a welfare call as part of our duty of care, with safeguarding at the heart of what we do.

Parents should provide:

- child's name;
 - reason for absence;
 - expected return date where known.
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Illness

Children should not attend nursery if they are too unwell to participate comfortably in normal activities or if they have an illness that could place others at risk.

Parents should follow the nursery's Illness and Exclusion Policy.

Where necessary, medical evidence may be requested for prolonged absences.

The nursery reserves the right to refuse admission where a child appears too unwell to attend safely.

Planned Absence

Parents should notify the nursery in advance where possible for:

- family holidays;
- medical appointments;
- hospital appointments;
- family events;
- religious observances.

Where appointments can reasonably be arranged outside nursery hours, parents are encouraged to do so.

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Attendance fees remain payable in accordance with the nursery's Fees Policy unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Late Arrival

Children benefit from arriving on time so they can settle into the day's routine.

Where a child arrives late:

- they will be welcomed sensitively;
- staff will help them settle;
- the arrival time will be recorded.

Repeated lateness will be discussed with parents to identify whether support is required.

Collection Times

Parents should collect children promptly at the end of their booked session.

Late collection may:

- cause distress to children;
- impact staffing ratios;
- incur additional charges in accordance with the Fees Policy.

Repeated late collection will be discussed with parents.

Where a child is not collected, and parents cannot be contacted, the nursery will follow its Missing Child / Uncollected Child Procedure.

Unexplained Absence Procedure

If a child expected to attend does not arrive and no reason has been received, the following procedure will be followed.

Stage 1 – Initial Check

Within an appropriate period after the session has started:

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- attendance records will be checked;
- communication systems reviewed;
- practitioners will confirm the child was expected.

Stage 2 – Contact Parents

The nursery will telephone parents or carers.

If unsuccessful, a voicemail may be left requesting immediate contact.

Stage 3 – Emergency Contacts

If parents cannot be reached, emergency contacts may be telephoned.

Stage 4 – Safeguarding Assessment

If the nursery remains unable to establish the child's whereabouts, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL will undertake a safeguarding risk assessment considering:

- child's age;
- previous attendance;
- safeguarding history;
- family circumstances;
- vulnerability;
- known medical needs;
- previous concerns.

Stage 5 – Further Action

Where concerns remain regarding a child's welfare, the DSL may contact:

- Children's Social Care;
- Police;
- other relevant safeguarding agencies.

The welfare of the child will always take priority.

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Persistent Absence

Where attendance becomes a concern, the nursery will seek to understand the reasons before taking further action.

This may include:

- discussion with parents;
- attendance meetings;
- identifying barriers;
- offering support;
- referral to appropriate services with parental consent where appropriate.

Attendance concerns may arise where there are:

- repeated unexplained absences;
- frequent illness without explanation;
- repeated late arrivals;
- sudden changes in attendance;
- extended periods without contact.

Children with SEND or Medical Needs

We recognise that some children may have legitimate reasons for irregular attendance.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where required.

The nursery will work with:

- parents;
- health professionals;
- SEND professionals;
- the Local Authority;
- other agencies

To ensure children receive appropriate support.

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Safeguarding

Attendance forms part of our safeguarding responsibilities. We will keep a record (with reasoning) for every child's absence, to establish if there is a pattern, as poor attendance may indicate:

- neglect;
- domestic abuse;
- parental mental health difficulties;
- substance misuse;
- family crisis;
- housing instability;
- illness;
- other safeguarding concerns.

Attendance concerns will always be considered alongside any existing safeguarding information.

No single absence automatically indicates a safeguarding concern; however, patterns of absence may require further exploration.

Confidentiality

Attendance information will be treated as confidential.

Information will only be shared:

- with parents;
- authorised staff;
- safeguarding agencies where appropriate;
- statutory agencies where legally required.

All records will be stored securely in accordance with UK GDPR.

Roles and Responsibilities

Nursery Manager

The Nursery Manager will:

- monitor attendance patterns;
- support staff;
- review attendance records;
- meet with parents where concerns arise;
- ensure safeguarding procedures are followed.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will:

- assess safeguarding risks relating to attendance;
- maintain records;
- liaise with external agencies where necessary;
- ensure attendance concerns are considered alongside safeguarding information.

Practitioners

Practitioners will:

- complete registers accurately;
- welcome children warmly;
- report concerns promptly;
- communicate attendance concerns to senior staff.

Monitoring

Attendance will be monitored through:

- daily registers;
- safeguarding reviews;
- attendance pattern analysis;
- supervision meetings;
- regular audits.

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The Nursery Manager will review attendance trends to identify children or families who may require additional support.
