



- **Our visions and values:**
- **Protecting children's right to play learn and have a voice.**
- **Keeping parents involved in children's development**
- **Governors and staff leading the way on quality**
- **Working partnership with health professionals and schools**
- **Being ethical, respectful and tolerant**

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Responsible governors	Children's Learning and Development Committee
Last review date	Summer 2026
Date of next review	Summer 2028
The policy is available for staff at:	School offices and shared drive
And for parents/carers at:	School website

Policy audit

V1, 3.11.15	Sandra Campbell
V2, 9.11.17	Helen Currie, Removal of Cricket Club and Children's Centres, reward certificates; 'link worker' changed to 'key worker', 'drinks' changed to 'water'
V3, 14.10.19	Helen Currie, Addition of 30-hours provision; Forest Alliance of Nursery Schools branding; 'pupils' changed to 'children'; addition of information for families regarding absence
V4, 29.11.21	Helen Currie, Amendment of times and information provided to families; 'carers' added; Outreach became Children and Families Centre
V5, Autumn 2023	Alison Emmett, Specified daycare age and register close times; new starter information updated
V6, Summer 2026	Alison Emmett, Helen Currie, Hasina Rashid, Re-written to take in the guidance for statutory education, Working Together to Improve Attendance (2024). Admin team inputted how we make this manageable; endorsed by teaching team.

Introduction

Attending school is a core part of having a successful and fulfilling school career. Prolonged absence, irregular attendance, and lack of punctuality can all undermine this. Children who often don't attend are at much greater risk of long-term disadvantages. Some get involved in antisocial or criminal behaviour.

It's the law that children go to primary and secondary school. It's called 'statutory education'. The Department for Education expects children to attend primary and secondary school at least 95% of days. Children with poor attendance at nursery are likely to have poor school attendance. Early action to break this pattern should have long-term benefits.

Nursery education is not statutory. Despite this, we aim for all our children to attend every day. We do our best to teach children and parents good attendance habits. This lays the

foundations for a successful school career. It also means government money that gives children the chance to learn isn't wasted.

The laws that underpin this are The Education Act 1996 and The Children's Act 1989 (section 36), and the statutory guidance, [Working together to improve school attendance \(2024\)](#).

The right to education

All children have an equal right to access education. As the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework says: "no children will be deprived of their educational opportunities by their own absence or lateness, or by that of other children".

What we offer

As Local Authority Nursery Schools, we admit children from age 2 until they transfer to primary school reception class.

In term-time we offer:

1. Free 15 hours for 2, 3, and four-year-olds We offer these as:
 - morning places: 9am to 12 noon, 5 days a week
 - afternoon places: 1pm to 4pm, 5 days a week
2. Free 30 hours for 2, 3, and 4-year-olds. We offer these as:
 - Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm, or
 - Monday to Thursday from 9am to 4pm. Plus Morning or afternoon on Friday.
3. Paid hours added to the free ones, which includes:
 - Breakfast (8am to 9am)
 - Teatime (4pm to 6pm)

What children get from good attendance

Children who come to school every day:

- settle in well
- find it much easier because they have a steady routine
- make good friends
- build relationships with staff
- strengthen their immune system and build their stamina
- Take the first steps in reading, writing and maths. This helps them to get ready for Primary School.
- have us plan things to do which match their interests.
- don't miss out on our plans.

Attendance aims

We aim to work together with parents/carers. We want all children to come to school every day and on time, most of the time. We want all children to access all the educational opportunities we offer. This is why we deal with the problems which make attendance harder as quickly as possible.

Some children are vulnerable in ways that can make attendance and punctuality hard. Some ways are:

- having a medical condition or SEND
- having or having had a social worker
- being a Looked After or Previously Looked After Child.

We still expect them to attend on time, as we do all children. We work with their families, offering the specific support that makes this possible.

What we expect

Children do these things:

- Attend school regularly.
- Go to bed consistently at the right time and come to school ready to learn.
- Have breakfast or lunch before they arrive.
- Arrive on time (morning registration is at 9am, afternoon registration is at 1pm). The register closes 15 minutes after the session start time. Anyone who arrives after this time is marked in late.
- Listen to parents/carers.
- Listen to our staff.

Parents/Carers do these things:

- Keep their contact details up-to-date.
- Bring their child to every session.
- Read the [School Absence Code](#) as part of the admissions process.
- Call school early on the first day their child is off. Say why.
- Book medical appointments around the school day, when they can.
- Tell their key person anything that might stop their child from attending school.
- Only ask for time off in term time in exceptional circumstances. Do this in advance.

The Schools do these things:

- We work to make school welcoming and safe. We tell everyone what children gain from good attendance. We have a clear School Absence Code. We give families a leaflet with this in as part of their settling in.
- We talk openly with parents and carers.
- Our education challenges each child at their level.
- [We keep full and correct attendance registers](#). We know which children have or have had a social worker, which children have medical conditions or SEND, and which children are Looked After or Previously Looked After.
- We follow up absences every day.
- We monitor attendance and punctuality. Every half term we look at each child's data in detail. We look for patterns and trends. We pay particular attention to children with vulnerabilities. This helps us focus our support on the children and child cohorts who need it most.
- The schools expect the same attendance for all children. We [work with families to help make this possible](#).

- Executive Headteacher (Head) Helen Currie is our attendance champion. She reports our progress to the governors. She does this at the Children's Learning and Development committee every term.
- Helen is also our designated teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children. She talks to governors about the attendance and punctuality of these children, as well as all children who are vulnerable in some way.

The Governors do these things:

- Support the school to focus on attendance so it improves.
- Make sure there is clear policy and guidance. Support this policy. Check that everyone involved follows it fairly.
- Every term, look closely at the data for attendance and punctuality to see patterns. Pay particular attention to children with vulnerabilities. Set targets for attendance and punctuality. Check on the changes that the schools' efforts make. Celebrate improvements and suggest areas to focus on.
- Make sure that staff get training to do their part.
- Appoint a Safeguarding Governor. They lead on attendance.

We keep full and correct attendance registers

- The teaching team take the attendance register.
- They mark up the register with these codes:
 - A black /stroke to say a child is present
 - A black 'L' to say a child is late (arrives after 9.15am) (SIMS Code 'U')
 - A red zero to say a child is absent
 - 'I' – Unwell / Ill
 - M- medical / hospital appt
 - C – family issues or other concerns
 - C1 – Authorised Holidays
 - G - Unauthorised Holidays
 - V – Educational Visits
 - R- Religious Holiday
- The key to these codes is in the register.
- They take it to the office soon after 9.15am in the morning, and 1.15pm in the afternoon.
- Parents/carers who arrive after 9.15am or 1.15pm must go to the office and explain why they are late. They are asked to choose from:
 - Woke up late
 - Traffic
 - Appointment
 - Other: say what this is

We follow up absences every day

Stage 1: day 1 when a child is absent and no one phones to explain:

- The office administrator emails the main contact for the child and asks why the child isn't in school.
- In the school Absences spreadsheet, they record:

- the reason for the absence
- the child's age and vulnerability, if any
- the date of the phone call
- the attendance percentage at that point.

Stage 2: does absence have a pattern?

- The office administrator calls the main contact until they feel this is having no effect (attendance percentage not moving).
- After each call, they record the date and the attendance percentage at that point.

Stage 3: talking to the main contact isn't working

- The office administrator calls the second contact a few times.
- After each call, they record the date and the attendance percentage at that point.

Stage 4: talking to the second contact isn't working

- When a child's attendance stays below 90%, the Office Administrator asks the parent/carer to talk to their child's Key Person. They might also ask the Key Person to start the conversation.
- The Key Person gently asks questions. The aim is to find out the difficulties the family are having which are causing lateness or irregular attendance. To give a family support that works, we need to understand their situation.
- After this meeting, the Key Person tells the Office Administrator. They record the date and the attendance percentage at that point.

Stage 5: the Key Person's support isn't working

- The Head calls the family and sets targets for attendance.
- She tells the Office Administrator, who records the date and the attendance percentage at that point.

Stage 6a: the child's attendance reaches the target

- The Head writes to the family to congratulate and encourage them to carry on.
- She tells the Office Administrator, who records the date and the attendance percentage at that point.

Stage 6b: the child's attendance is below the target

- The Head writes to the family and invites them to a meeting.
- At the meeting, she might suggest a referral to Early Help. This would increase the level of support the family get.
- She tells the Office Administrator, who records the date and the attendance percentage at that point.
- If a child is absent and we haven't been able to contact anyone in the family, the Head will refer the matter to the School Governors. We may refer them to Social Care and offer the place to the next person on the Waiting List.

We monitor attendance and lateness

- Alongside the stages, the Office Administrators give the Head a report of all children's attendance and lateness every half term. The data comes from SIMS.

- The Key Person offers support to the families with children whose attendance is below 90%.
- The staff team talk about children with attendance below 80% at staff meeting. Every half term, their Key Person meets with the family. They use [What children get from good attendance](#) and the [School Absence Code](#) as prompts.
- The Head writes to the families of children with red attendance (below 75%) and children with amber attendance (between 75% and 85%).
- She looks for patterns in the data. Perhaps a particular group would thrive with specific support.
- We add children with red or amber attendance to our vulnerable children's list. This makes sure we talk about their attendance regularly.
- The Head and the key people talk about children's attendance at each weekly staff meeting.
- We include attendance issues on a child's transition report. This goes to their primary school. The Head decides what this says.

School Absence Code: Be on time. Don't miss school.

This code sets out why it's good to be on time and when it's OK for a child to miss school. It also says when it's not OK to miss school.

Why it's good for children to be on time:

- Your child's learning starts on time
- You don't interrupt other children's learning
- Your child feels they belong
- Your child's behaviour improves

When families pick up on time:

- Your child is happier.
- The staff go home on time.
- The staff's families are happier.

Planned Time Off (Holidays)

Before a child takes time off:

- The family **must fill out** the 'holiday request form'.
- Get the form [from our website](#).
- The Head must say **yes before the family book**.

When is Planned Time Off Allowed?

The **Head will approve** these reasons:

- The trip is the only possible way.
- The Head allows at most two weeks in one school year.
- The Head **will not say yes** to second requests.

Unplanned Time Off (Sickness/Emergency)

After your child misses school:

- Tell the school why your child wasn't in.

- The Head must accept the reason.

When is Unplanned Time Off Allowed?

The **Head will approve** these reasons:

- Your child is sick. Tell the school right away.
- A death in the family (bereavement).
- A family member abroad is very ill or has died. The trip is to visit this person. For this reason, the Head may say yes to more than two weeks off.
- Doctor or dentist visits. You must show the school proof.
- Days for religious holidays.

Support we offer

We start with the thought that all parents and carers want the best for their child. It is our job to help them do that.

- We support families who are finding it difficult to get their children to school. Or to arrive on time.
- We work out when parents need support.
- When families agree, we refer them to Early Help to get this. We might refer them to another agency.
- We help families apply for EHC Plans for children who have significant special educational or medical needs.
- We work with the Virtual School Head to make and deliver Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Looked After Children. We talk to the parents of previously looked-after children about how to use Pupil Premium Plus funding.
- When a child has a social worker, we tell them about the support we give and the child's attendance.
- We go on giving support to children who have had a social worker for as long as they are with us. The experiences that led to them having a social worker can have lasting effects.
- We give families advice about health matters.
- We invite the children to Breakfast Club. This helps them arrive early. They start the day calmly and have a healthy breakfast.
- We give them healthy snacks and water all day.
- When a child keeps on being late, or the parent or carer keeps on picking them up late, the child's Key Person meets them briefly at pick up to find out the reason.
- We ask parents who collect their child late at the end of sessions to sign the Late Pick Up Book and write down why they were late.

Extended daycare offer

Sometimes families go on being late or not bringing their child to school at all. When this happens, we invite them to use our Breakfast Club and Daycare.

Some children experience significant social disadvantage. Sometimes the Head agrees for them to have a free place at Breakfast, Teatime, or Holiday Playscheme.

We expect that this will help in these ways:

- It makes good punctuality and attendance habits.
- It helps children form friendship groups.
- It makes the start to the day calmer.
- The children start the day with healthy food.
- This healthy, calm start lets them concentrate better during the day.
- It helps parents/carers who are having problems with childcare arrangements.

Changing schools

Sometimes a family decides to change schools. There are many possible reasons. Parents/carers must tell the Head these things:

- The date the child will be leaving and starting the new school
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if known.

Sometimes a child stops coming to nursery and the school knows they aren't attending another nursery. There might be a good reason for this. But sometimes we follow all the stages of offering support set out above, nothing works, and we don't know a good reason for it. When this happens, we are likely to have concerns about the child. We tell Early Help or Social Services.

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