

1.7 Attendance Policy



Policy statement

We believe good attendance is essential if children are to be settled and take full advantage of the learning and development opportunities available to them. At a young age continuity and consistency are important contributors to a child's well-being and progress. Also, we believe regular attendance at preschool can set good practice for school.

Our aim is:

- **To create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality' and valued**

Benefits of doing so include the following:

Good habits

- It builds in young children the idea that getting up and going to school or pre-school is simply what you do
- Children who attend every planned session develop a feel for the rhythm of the week and gain a sense of security from some regular elements, even when the actual pattern or focus on their learning or activity may vary widely from week to week.

Secure relationships

- Young children find it easier to build and sustain a range of social relationships when they regularly attend their childcare setting, according to the pattern agreed with the family
- For some families, particularly at times of stress, the child's regular attendance at the setting allows parents to get other things done and helps them enjoy spending time with the child when he or she is at home
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Self-esteem

- Children who rarely miss sessions at the setting and come on time are more likely to feel good about themselves. This is because they know what goes on, what to expect, feel more confident with adults and other children and have more opportunities to be valued and praised for their own special contribution.
- Children who regularly miss sessions or are generally late, can frequently experience a sense of having to try a little bit harder just to understand what is going on and what other children are talking about or doing.
- Regular attendance on time helps many young children to separate from their parents or carers at the start of the day and settle more readily into daily life in their setting.

- Some children need some flexibility when they first start attending to settle in but there should be a clear, time-bound plan in place to ensure the attendance patterns are normalised as soon as possible
- **To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive**
 - Staff carefully plan every session for each child in their care and want to take every opportunity to help them thrive; experiences gained in one session are often developed further following the sessions
 - Children learn in many different ways; through playing with the others and through being in the company of staff who actively support their learning and development.
 - Underachievement is often linked to lower attendance. Good attendance and coming to the setting on time is important for every child, but especially those for whom specific factors make them more vulnerable to disengagement or underachievement.

Most children are well supported by their families and continue to thrive, whatever their background or circumstances, however, there may be factors in children's lives which make it more likely that they could experience some difficulties. So, it is particularly important to pay close attention to the patterns of attendance for potentially vulnerable groups of children, including, for example;

- Children facing difficult family circumstances e.g housing problems, bereavement, separation/ divorce
- Children from families facing some degree of financial hardship e.g. in receipt of benefits
- Children with additional needs, learning difficulties or disabilities
- Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Children about whom other agencies have raised concerns, including those supported through Early Help

If any child's attendance starts to cause concern, it should be discussed with any other staff who work with any of the child's siblings who attend other settings and with the manager/DSL. This helps establish whether there are issues only for the individual child or if the family may be going through a challenging time.

- **To be consistent in implementation of our policy and procedures**

We will promote, record and monitor attendance.

All parents are made aware of the importance of regular attendance prior to entry and of the importance of collecting children on time. We will collate and monitor attendance information for all children each term in line with safeguarding good practice. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that the emergency contact numbers that we hold on file are up-to-date.

This policy sets out the procedures to be followed in the event of a child being absent from Duxford Preschool.

Procedure

- We ask that parents inform us in advance of any holidays, doctors/dentist appointments or any other planned absences from the preschool by emailing absence@duxfordpreschool.org.uk
- For any un-planned absences, for example if a child is sick, we must be notified by 9.15 on the morning of usual attendance either by phone or email

- If we have not heard from the parents or carers by 9.15am, we will call the primary contact to establish the reason for absence
- If we cannot make contact with a parent or carer, we will use all the contact details and the emergency contacts we have on file, to establish why the child is absent
- If we are concerned about the welfare of a child, we reserve the right to contact social services
- We will make clear and accurate entries of absences using manual or electronic registers with the following categories:
 - Illness
 - Holidays
 - Other absence
- Consistently and thoroughly investigate all absences for individual children and their siblings, keeping good records of the family's explanations
- Being rigorous in monitoring attendance and in identifying and analysing patterns of absence and the number of sessions missed
- Fees remain payable during all periods of absence, except in exceptional circumstances which must be pre-approved by the Manager
- We must notify Cambridge County Council where children in receipt of Early Years Free Entitlement are absent for more than 2 weeks in a term
- We reserve the right to withdraw a child's place if there is a significant level of absence from the setting which is not due to unforeseen circumstances

Version	Changes Made	Author	Date	Review Date
1.0	Baseline version	P Eccleston	26 th April 2018	April 2019
1.1	Updated with minor formatting changes and included the use codes in the register to track absences.	N Hanlon	17 th April 2019	September 2019
1.1	Reviewed – no changes	N Hanlon	30 th September 19	September 2019
1.1	Reviewed – no changes	N Hanlon	30 th September 20	September 2021
1.1	Reviewed – no changes	N Hanlon	29 th September 21	September 2022
1.1	Reviewed – no changes	N Hanlon	24 th September 22	September 2023
1.2	Updated with minor changes	N Hanlon	1 st September 23	September 2024
1.2	Reviewed – no changes	K Draper	18 th September 2024	September 2025
1.3	Reviewed – typo corrected	MW/ KM	23 rd February 2026	February 2027
1.4	Reviewed alongside LA September 2025 update	KM/ MW	16 th March 2026	March 2027
1.5	Updated with minor changes from LA model policy	MW/KM	18 th May 2026	May 2027