

Smallville Nursery

Attendance Policy

April 2026

To be revised April 2027

At Smallville Nursery, we believe that good attendance plays a fundamental role in supporting children's educational achievement, well-being, and safety. Establishing regular routines for young children supports the settling-in process and enhances their sense of security, belonging, and continuity. When children attend nursery consistently, they build stronger relationships, gain confidence, and make steady progress across all areas of learning and development.

This policy outlines our approach to promoting, monitoring, and supporting regular attendance and punctuality. We aim to create a positive culture where attendance is valued by children, families, and staff, and where barriers to attendance are identified and addressed collaboratively.

Legal Framework

This policy is informed by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2024, specifically sections relating to *Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements*, which place a duty on early years providers to promote the welfare and well-being of all children. It also aligns with the Children Act 2004, the Childcare Act 2006, and the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance, which recognise that non-attendance may be an indicator of safeguarding or welfare concerns.

Our Commitment

At Smallville Nursery, we promote a culture where good attendance and punctuality are valued by everyone within our community. We strive to foster a socially and educationally inclusive environment in which all children feel welcome, supported, and able to thrive. Working in close partnership with parents and carers, we aim to encourage regular attendance and identify any barriers that may prevent children from attending consistently. Attendance is carefully recorded and monitored so that any emerging patterns, trends, or concerns can be addressed at the earliest opportunity. We also communicate clearly with families about our expectations regarding attendance and absence reporting, ensuring a shared understanding of the importance of continuity in a child's early education. To reinforce this positive approach, we recognise and celebrate good and improving attendance as an important part of our overall culture of well-being and achievement.

Authorised Absence

While attendance at nursery is not statutory, authorised absences will be granted in the following circumstances when parents inform the nursery on or before the first day of absence:

- Illness of the child.
- Illness of siblings or parents.
- Bereavement.
- Health service appointments.
- Holidays, including extended visits to family overseas.
- Religious observance.
- Emergency or exceptional circumstances.

If parents know in advance that their child will be absent, they should inform the nursery as soon as possible by message on Blossom Educational, email, text, or phone call.

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance is recorded daily and monitored regularly by the management team to identify any emerging issues. Accurate registers are maintained to ensure that children's attendance patterns are clear and that any concerns are acted upon promptly.

All staff are alert to the possibility that persistent non-attendance or unexplained absences could indicate wider concerns, including potential safeguarding issues. Managers and key persons will pay particular attention to the attendance patterns of children who may be considered vulnerable or already receiving support from other agencies.

Procedures for Recording, Monitoring and Following Up Non-Attendance

- Registration is completed as children arrive each day. Registers are checked and messages are reviewed for any reported absences.
- If a child is absent and a reason has been provided, this will be recorded on the register.
- If a child is absent without explanation for two consecutive days, the nursery manager will contact the main carer by telephone.
- If there is still no contact after one week, a letter will be sent to the family requesting an update and, if needed, an appointment will be arranged to discuss the child's attendance.
- If there has been no contact or explanation after one month, the child's name may be removed from the register and the place allocated to another family on the waiting list. The Local Authority will be informed that the child has left the nursery.

If contact cannot be made by telephone, the following steps will be taken:

1. Contact the second main carer (using all priority and secondary numbers).
2. Contact the first and second emergency contacts.
3. If no contact is made, a home visit may be carried out. If there is no response, a contact postcard will be posted through the door.
4. If there continues to be no contact and there is cause for concern, the Health Visiting Team, Early Help, or Children and Family Service will be contacted for support.
5. In urgent cases, where there are immediate welfare concerns, the police or social care may be contacted to carry out a welfare check.

Working in Partnership with Families

Any issues affecting regular attendance are best resolved through open communication between the nursery, parents, and the child's key person. If a child appears reluctant to attend nursery, parents are encouraged to contact the nursery as soon as possible. Working together, we can identify and

address any underlying causes- such as separation anxiety, changes at home, or developmental needs - ensuring the child receives appropriate support.

For families experiencing difficulties that impact attendance, the key person or manager may offer advice, additional settling-in sessions, or referrals to external support services such as the Health Visiting Team, Portage, or Early Help.

Leaving the Nursery

If a parent or carer decides to withdraw their child from Smallville Nursery, our Parent Contract and Terms and Conditions outline the required notice period. This ensures that the child's place is formally closed and removed from our systems.

If a child transitions to another early year's provider or school, we ask parents to provide details of the new setting so that we can transfer relevant information to support a smooth transition.