



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Last reviewed:	October 2025
Next review due:	October 2026

Statement of intent

Good attendance plays a fundamental role in supporting children's educational achievement, well-being and in keeping children safer. Establishing regular routines for young children supports the settling-in process and enhances their sense of security and belonging. Even if a child only has a part-time place, regular attendance is still especially important. Attending nursery helps children establish routines of going to school regularly and being on time, which can help them make a smooth and positive transition to reception.

This policy sets out the procedures in place to promote and monitor attendance within The Little Firefly Forest School and the steps that will be followed if a child is absent from the setting. It also explains the importance and benefits of regular attendance.

The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework guidance advises that providers must follow up on absences in a timely manner. If a child is absent for a prolonged period of time, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, attempts must be made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts. Providers must consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use their professional judgement when deciding if the child's absence should be considered as prolonged. Consideration must be given to the child's vulnerability, parent's and/or carer's vulnerability and their home life. Any concerns must be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

Our aims

- To create a culture where good attendance and punctuality is 'normality' and valued by all.
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.
- To be consistent in the implementation of our policy and procedures for recording and monitoring attendance.
- Work effectively with parents, children, and partners through building trusted relationships to work together to remove barriers to attendance.

To promote good attendance in our forest school we will:

- Convey clearly to parents and children that regular attendance and punctuality is essential and is in the child's best interest and that unexplained absence will be investigated.
- Keep records of attendance which provide accurate information on actual attendance and lateness to enable monitoring and evaluation so that emerging patterns are addressed.
- Build on existing good practice that fosters a positive attitude to good attendance by quickly responding to children's absence, recognising, and celebrating, 'good' and 'improving' attendance.
- Target attendance and lateness where there has been an issue and aim to set in place strategies and techniques to support and ensure improvement.

Working with parents

The setting will make its policy on attendance clear to parents and children through sharing information and expectations prior to admission. The systems and procedures in place to promote children's attendance and punctuality will continue to be shared with parents at a universal level through parents' newsletters, online apps, and emails. Managers and staff will work with parents to address specific aspects of attendance or punctuality, which cause concern through discussion and where appropriate communication will be used where a parental response is required.

Whilst attendance at nursery is not statutory, authorised absence is only normally granted in the following circumstances:

- Illness of the child
- Illness of siblings or parents
- Health services appointments
- Holidays
- Religious observance
- Emergency circumstances

Where these circumstances arise parents should inform the nursery preferably prior to the first day of absence or on the first day of absence.

If your child is going to be absent, please email or text the nursery manager who is on duty on the day of your child's absence prior to the absence to let them know that they will be absent, the timings and the reason why. If it is an unexpected absence, please message by 9am on the day of the absence.

Monitoring attendance and punctuality

Records of children's attendance are accurately kept and regularly monitored to ensure that we can identify any potential problems and look for patterns. All managers and staff are alert to signs that children and learners who are missing might be at risk of abuse or neglect, and appropriate action is taken when children and learners stop attending. In our settings, we are aware that attendance is not statutory, but that non-attendance could be an indicator of other concerns. All managers and staff are particularly aware of the need to monitor groups such as children who are in receipt of two year-old funding, and those for whom we receive Early Years Pupil Premium, as these groups are considered to be vulnerable learners.

Procedures in place to record, monitor and follow up non-attendance

Daily registration

Digital registration is completed when a child arrives. The Little Firefly opens at 8.15am but this is not a strict start time for children. If a child has not arrived by 10am, the nursery manager will contact the child's parents/carers. A child's attendance or non-attendance will be recorded along with any lateness if after 10am.

Non-attendance

If a child is absent and we are informed of their reason for absence this will be recorded on the register. If a child is absent without an explanation a telephone call will be made to the parents to establish the reason for the absence. If no contact is made, then the following process will be followed.

- 1) A telephone call to the parent/carer's work will be made
- 2) An email to parents will be sent
- 3) Calls to other emergency contacts will be made to try to establish why the child is absent
- 4) Calls to the siblings' schools, nurseries or childminders will be made, if we have the details, to establish if they or the sibling can confirm the child's whereabouts.

If following this, no contact is made, and there is cause for concern that the child's whereabouts remain unknown then the setting can contact the children's social services for the setting's area.

In more urgent cases, the police may be contacted to carry out safe and well checks.

If there are any concerns around a child's unnotified absence, prolonged absence or patterns of absences, staff are advised to follow the safeguarding policy and procedure around concerns about a child.

Policies, procedures and risk assessments referred to in this document:

- Safeguarding policy

External references:

- [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)