



ATTENDANCE Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Wentworth Nursery School and Children’s Centre is committed to promoting good attendance and punctuality for all children. Regular attendance supports children’s learning, wellbeing, emotional security, social development and readiness for later schooling.

This policy aims to:

- Promote a culture where good attendance and punctuality are valued.
- Ensure all children receive their full entitlement to high-quality early years education.
- Support children’s welfare, safeguarding and wellbeing through robust attendance procedures.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to remove barriers to attendance.
- Ensure all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities linked to attendance.
- Ensure attendance procedures comply with current legislation, safeguarding guidance and best practice.
- Identify patterns of concern early and provide timely support for families.

At Wentworth Nursery School, regular attendance and punctuality are regarded as essential and non-negotiable expectations for all families accessing funded early education places. The Governing Body and school leaders recognise their shared responsibility to ensure children attend consistently in order to maximise the best possible start to children’s lives, learning, development and wellbeing. Regular attendance enables children to build secure relationships, establish routines, develop a sense of belonging and fully access the rich learning opportunities available within the nursery environment.

Consistent attendance is fundamental to supporting children's progress across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage and preparing them for future education.

The school acknowledges that some families may experience exceptional circumstances which affect attendance and will always work in partnership with parents/carers to provide appropriate support while maintaining high expectations for attendance and punctuality.

2. LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

This policy is based on the following legislation and guidance:

The Education Act 1996

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2024
- Children Missing Education Guidance
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Local Authority attendance and safeguarding guidance

The EYFS requires providers to maintain accurate daily records of children's attendance and to take appropriate action where there are concerns about a child's welfare or unexplained absence.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Monitor attendance arrangements and safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure the school complies with statutory guidance and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Receive regular attendance reports from the Headteacher.
- Support a culture of high attendance and inclusion.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Lead on attendance and safeguarding procedures.
- Monitor attendance patterns and identify concerns.
- Ensure staff follow procedures consistently.
- Work with families and external agencies where attendance concerns arise.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken where children are absent unexpectedly.

Staff

Staff will:

- Accurately complete attendance registers.
- Promote positive attendance and punctuality.
- Raise concerns promptly with safeguarding leads.
- Work supportively with families to improve attendance.

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends regularly and arrives on time.
- Informing the school promptly if their child is absent.
- Providing reasons for absence.
- Keeping emergency contact details up to date.
- Informing the school if circumstances change or if they intend to withdraw their child.

4. SAFEGUARDING AND ATTENDANCE

Attendance is a key safeguarding responsibility.

Regular attendance helps staff to:

- Monitor children's welfare and wellbeing.
- Identify emerging safeguarding concerns.
- Maintain regular contact with children and families.
- Ensure children receive appropriate support.

For some children, particularly those identified as vulnerable, subject to Child Protection Plans, Child in Need Plans, Early Help support, or experiencing family difficulties, attendance may be closely monitored as part of safeguarding arrangements.

Unexplained absence may indicate safeguarding concerns. Where staff are unable to establish contact with a family and there are concerns for a child's welfare, the school may:

- Attempt contact using all available telephone numbers and email addresses.
- Contact emergency contacts.
- Conduct a welfare check or home visit.
- Seek advice from the Local Authority.
- Make referrals to Children's Social Care or other agencies where appropriate.

All attendance concerns will be recorded in line with safeguarding and data protection procedures.

5. EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents/carers should:

- Notify the school on the first day of absence, preferably before the start of the session.
- Provide a reason for absence and an expected return date where possible.
- Maintain regular communication with the school during longer absences.
- Ensure children attend consistently except when genuinely unwell.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- Ensure children arrive and are collected on time.

The school recognises that families may sometimes experience difficulties affecting attendance and will work supportively and sensitively with parents/carers.

6. PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

We promote attendance by:

- Providing a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Building strong relationships with children and families.
- Supporting children's emotional wellbeing.
- Working with families to identify barriers early.
- Offering support and signposting where needed.

Our approach is supportive, child-centred and focused on partnership with families.

7. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

- Attendance registers are completed at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.
- Children may self-register using age-appropriate systems such as name cards to support independence and belonging.
- Registers are legal documents and must be completed accurately.
- Reasons for absence are recorded using the appropriate attendance codes.
- Registers are stored securely in accordance with data protection requirements.

8. FOLLOWING UP ABSENCE

If a child is absent and the school has not been informed:

1. The school will attempt to contact parents/carers on the first day of absence.
2. If no response is received, additional contact attempts may be made using all available contact details.
3. Emergency contacts may be contacted if there are safeguarding concerns.
4. If the school remains unable to establish contact and there are concerns about the child's welfare, safeguarding procedures will be followed.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL will determine appropriate next steps, which may include a home visit or referral to external agencies.

All actions taken will be recorded.

9. PERSISTENT AND IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE

Attendance is monitored regularly.

Concerns may include:

- Frequent absence
- Repeated illness
- Persistent lateness
- Irregular attendance patterns
- Unauthorised absence

Where concerns arise, staff will work with families to understand any difficulties and offer support.

Usually, the child's key worker will speak with the family first. If concerns continue, senior leaders may become involved and additional support or safeguarding measures may be considered.

Where necessary, the nursery may work with:

- Health professionals
- Early Help services
- Family Support services
- Children's Social Care
- Other relevant agencies

10. CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)

The school has a duty to safeguard children who may be at risk of becoming missing from education.

If a child stops attending and the school is unable to establish the child's whereabouts, the school will follow Local Authority Children Missing Education procedures.

The school will:

- Make reasonable enquiries to establish contact.
- Keep records of all attempts made.
- Notify the Local Authority where appropriate.
- Remove children from roll only in accordance with statutory guidance.

11. LONGER ABSENCES AND REMOVAL FROM ROLL

Parents/carers must inform the school if:

- The family is moving.
- The child will be absent for an extended period.
- They intend to withdraw their child from the nursery.

Where prolonged absence occurs without communication, the school will:

- Make repeated attempts to contact the family.
- Follow safeguarding and CME procedures where appropriate.
- Seek guidance from the Local Authority before removing a child from roll.

Children will not be removed from roll without appropriate checks and procedures being completed.

12. LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Parents/carers are expected to arrange holidays outside term time wherever possible.

Extended absence can significantly disrupt:

- > Children's learning and development
- > Established routines
- > Friendships and relationships
- > Emotional wellbeing
- > Continuity of learning and progress
- >

Parents/carers must:

- > Request leave of absence in advance
- > Discuss the request with the Headteacher
- > Provide a clear explanation of why time away from education is being requested

The school will consider requests on an individual basis and may request additional information where necessary.

Where children are being taken out of the country, parents/carers may be required to provide:

- > Evidence of return travel arrangements
- > Return flight or travel tickets
- > Confirmation of intended return date

This is to provide reassurance and evidence of commitment to the child returning promptly to continue their education.

Repeated absences, extended periods away from nursery, or patterns of leave during term time will result in:

- > A meeting with the Headteacher
- > Discussion regarding the impact on the child's education, wellbeing and attendance
- > Consideration of whether additional safeguarding support or monitoring is required

Where there are safeguarding concerns linked to:

- > Prolonged absence
- > Lack of communication with the school
- > Uncertainty regarding a child's whereabouts

The school will follow safeguarding and Children Missing Education procedures.

13. MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS AND ILLNESS

Children who are unwell should remain at home to prevent the spread of infection and to support their recovery.

Parents/carers should follow school guidance regarding exclusion periods for infectious illnesses.

Medical or dental appointments should, where possible, be arranged outside nursery hours.

The school may request medical evidence where there are concerns regarding repeated or prolonged illness absence.

14. PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality is important because late arrival:

- Can cause distress for some children.
- Disrupts learning and routines.
- Reduces opportunities for children to settle and engage positively.

Children should arrive on time and be collected promptly.

Persistent lateness will be discussed with parents/carers to identify supportive solutions.

Lateness is recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate attendance code.

15. COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS AND LATE COLLECTION

Parents/carers must collect children promptly at the end of the session.

If a parent/carer is delayed, they must contact the school as soon as possible.

The school will follow safeguarding procedures where children are not collected.

Repeated late collection may result in:

- Meetings with parents/carers.
- Additional support planning.
- Charges in line with nursery charging procedures, where applicable.

Where there are significant safeguarding concerns regarding collection arrangements, the school may contact Children's Social Care or other relevant agencies.

16. CHILDREN WITH SEND OR ADDITIONAL NEEDS

The school recognises that some children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), medical conditions or additional needs may experience barriers affecting attendance or punctuality.

The school will:

- Work collaboratively with families.
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Consider individual circumstances sensitively.
- Liaise with external professionals where needed.

Attendance procedures will be applied fairly, proportionately and in line with the Equality Act 2010.

17. EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND SUPPORT

Wentworth Nursery School is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all children and families.

Attendance support will:

- Be child-centred and inclusive.
- Take account of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- Respect cultural, family and individual circumstances.
- Focus on support rather than blame.

The school recognises that some families may require additional support and will work in partnership with relevant services where appropriate.

18. MONITORING AND GOVERNANCE

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored through:

- Daily register checks.
- Weekly monitoring by administrative staff and senior leaders.
- Termly attendance analysis.
- Safeguarding reviews where attendance concerns arise.
- Reporting to Governors.

Governors will receive regular attendance information to support oversight of safeguarding, inclusion and school improvement.

19. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Children Missing Education Procedures
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policies

20. REVIEW of POLICY

The Governing Body is responsible for reviewing and approving this policy.

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance or Local Authority procedures.