

St Margaret Clitherow Nursery

Attendance Policy 2026-27

Effective from: September 2026

Next review date: September 2027

Policy owner: Headteacher

Approved by: Governing Body

1. Introduction and Purpose

Regular attendance at nursery is important for children's learning, development and wellbeing. While attendance at nursery is not statutory, we believe that consistent attendance supports children's progress across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and helps establish positive habits for lifelong learning.

Regular attendance at nursery is important for children's learning, development and wellbeing. We work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure children attend consistently and safely.

Links to the Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS framework emphasises the importance of strong partnerships between practitioners and parents/carers. Regular attendance enables us to:

- **Support children's prime areas of learning:** Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Communication and Language; and Physical Development all benefit from consistent interaction with peers and practitioners
- **Build secure attachments:** Regular attendance helps children form trusting relationships with key persons and feel safe and confident in the nursery environment
- **Observe and assess progress:** Consistent attendance allows us to accurately observe children's development and plan appropriate next steps
- **Identify and address needs early:** Regular contact helps us identify any emerging developmental concerns or additional needs promptly
- **Prepare for school:** Establishing good attendance habits now supports a smooth transition to Reception, where attendance becomes a legal requirement

The EYFS framework states that "children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and

needs." Regular attendance is essential for us to provide this responsive, individualised support.

2. Our Commitment

We are committed to:

- Working in partnership with parents and carers to promote excellent attendance
 - Communicating clearly and promptly about attendance matters
 - Supporting families to overcome any barriers to attendance
 - Celebrating and encouraging good attendance
 - Maintaining accurate attendance records
 - Following robust safeguarding procedures when children are absent
 - Preparing children and families for the transition to Reception
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3. Expectations for Parents and Carers

To support your child's attendance and development, we ask that you:

Notification of Absence

- **Notify the nursery before 9:00am on the first day of absence** if your child will not be attending
- Contact us by:
 - **Phone:** 01344 424030
 - **Email:** secretary@smc-bracknell.com
- Provide a clear reason for the absence
- Keep us informed if the absence is likely to continue beyond one day

Planned Absences

- Inform the nursery in advance of any planned absences, including holidays
- Understand that while we cannot refuse permission for absence (as attendance is non-statutory), we encourage you to consider the impact on your child's learning and development

Emergency Contacts

- Provide a minimum of two emergency contacts for your child (three preferred)
- Ensure all contact details are kept up to date
- Inform us immediately of any changes to contact information

Punctuality

- Bring your child to nursery at the agreed session start time
- Collect your child promptly at the end of their session
- Contact us if you are going to be late collecting your child

Communication

- Respond to any communication from the nursery about your child's attendance
 - Let us know if you are experiencing any difficulties that may affect your child's attendance so we can offer support
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4. Nursery Actions on Absence

We take a proactive approach to following up on absences to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.

First Day Response

- **By 9:30am:** If we have not heard from parents/carers and a child has not arrived for their expected session, office staff will make a phone call to the parent/carer to establish the reason for absence
- **If parents/carers cannot be contacted:** We will attempt to reach the emergency contacts provided
- **All contact attempts will be logged** with date, time, person contacted, and outcome

Ongoing Monitoring

- Attendance is monitored regularly by the nursery lead and headteacher
- We track patterns of absence to identify any concerns early
- Where a child has frequent or unexplained absences, we will arrange a conversation with parents/carers to:

- Understand any barriers to attendance
- Offer appropriate support
- Discuss the impact on the child's learning and development
- Agree strategies to improve attendance

We recognise that young children may experience more illness than older children, and we will work sensitively and supportively with families.

Safeguarding Response

Where a child is expected to attend and we cannot make contact with parents/carers or emergency contacts, we will follow our safeguarding procedures without delay.

If there are concerns for a child's welfare, we will follow safeguarding procedures, which may include contacting children's social care or requesting a police welfare check.

This may include:

- **Immediate action:** The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed immediately
- **Welfare checks:** We may conduct a home visit or request a police welfare check if we have immediate concerns for a child's safety
- **Multi-agency liaison:** We may contact other professionals involved with the family (with appropriate information sharing protocols)
- **Referral to children's social care:** If we believe a child may be at risk of harm, we will make a referral in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- **Children Missing Education procedures:** For prolonged unexplained absences, we will follow local authority procedures for children missing education

All safeguarding concerns will be managed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

5. Illness and Infection Control

We follow government guidance on infection control to protect all children and staff. This supports the EYFS requirement to "take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection."

When to Keep Your Child at Home

Parents/carers should keep their child at home if they:

- Have a temperature/fever (above 38°C)
- Have vomiting or diarrhoea (children should remain at home for **48 hours after the last episode**)
- Have a contagious infection (e.g., chickenpox, impetigo, conjunctivitis) until they are no longer infectious
- Are too unwell to participate comfortably in nursery activities
- Have any symptoms that require medical attention

When Your Child Becomes Unwell at Nursery

- We will contact you immediately if your child becomes unwell during their session
- We will provide a comfortable, supervised space for your child until you arrive
- We will provide information about when it is safe for your child to return
- In an emergency, we will call 999 and then contact you

Medical Appointments

We understand that medical appointments are sometimes necessary during nursery hours. Where possible, please:

- Schedule appointments outside of nursery hours
- Provide advance notice if your child needs to miss nursery for an appointment
- Bring your child to nursery before or after the appointment if possible

6. Supporting Good Attendance

We understand that families may face various challenges that affect their child's attendance. We are committed to working in partnership with you.

How We Support Families

- **Regular communication:** We share information about your child's progress and the importance of attendance
- **Early intervention:** We identify and address barriers to attendance promptly
- **Flexible approach:** We work with families to find solutions that support attendance

- **Signposting:** We can direct families to additional support services where appropriate (e.g., health services, family support, financial advice)
- **Transition support:** We prepare children and families for Reception, where attendance becomes statutory

Celebrating Good Attendance

We celebrate good attendance through:

- Positive feedback to children and parents
- Recognition in newsletters

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

We recognise that families may face various barriers to attendance, including:

- Health issues (child or family member)
- Transport difficulties
- Financial pressures
- Family circumstances
- Anxiety or settling-in difficulties

Please talk to us if you are experiencing any difficulties. We are here to help and can work with you to find solutions.

7. Preparing for Reception

As your child approaches the transition to Reception, we will:

- Provide information about statutory attendance requirements
- Discuss the importance of regular attendance for school-age children
- Explain the legal responsibilities of parents when children reach compulsory school age
- Support families to establish routines that will continue into Reception
- Share information about the school's main attendance policy

Important: When your child enters Reception (the September after their 4th birthday), attendance becomes statutory and is governed by law. The school's main Attendance Policy will then apply.

8. Record Keeping and Data Management

Even though nursery attendance is non-statutory, we maintain accurate records to support our safeguarding responsibilities and monitor children's engagement.

Records We Keep

- Daily attendance registers for each session
- Reasons for absence (as provided by parents/carers)
- Contact attempts made when a child is absent
- Any concerns raised about attendance patterns
- Conversations with parents about attendance
- Actions taken to support improved attendance

Data Protection

All attendance records are:

- Stored securely in accordance with GDPR and our Data Protection Policy
- Accessible only to relevant staff members
- Retained in line with our retention schedule
- Used only for the purposes of safeguarding, supporting children's development, and improving our provision

Sharing Information

We may share attendance information with:

- The child's Reception teacher to support transition
- Other professionals involved with the child (with appropriate consent and information sharing protocols)
- Local authority services where there are safeguarding concerns
- Ofsted during inspections

9. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

- Approve and monitor this policy
- Ensure the school fulfils its safeguarding duties in relation to attendance
- Review attendance data as part of monitoring the nursery's effectiveness

The Headteacher

- Ensure this policy is implemented consistently
- Monitor overall attendance patterns
- Ensure staff are trained in attendance and safeguarding procedures
- Lead on safeguarding concerns related to attendance
- Report attendance matters to governors

The Nursery Manager

- Monitor daily attendance
- Oversee first-day calling procedures
- Identify patterns of concern
- Work with families to support good attendance
- Maintain accurate records
- Liaise with the DSL on safeguarding matters

Office Staff

- Record daily attendance accurately
- Make first-day contact calls
- Log all contact attempts
- Alert the nursery lead to any concerns

All Nursery Staff

- Record attendance at the start of each session

- Report any concerns about attendance to the nursery lead
- Support children's settling and engagement
- Build positive relationships with families
- Promote the importance of attendance

Parents and Carers

- Ensure their child attends regularly
- Notify the nursery of absences before 9:00am
- Provide accurate contact information
- Work with the nursery to address any barriers to attendance
- Prepare their child for the transition to statutory education

10. Monitoring and Review

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body and headteacher, and updated as necessary to reflect:

- Changes in EYFS framework or statutory guidance
- Changes in our nursery provision
- Feedback from parents, staff, and governors
- Analysis of attendance data and effectiveness of procedures

Monitoring Effectiveness

We will monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:

- Tracking overall nursery attendance rates
- Analysing patterns of absence
- Reviewing the outcomes of interventions with families
- Gathering feedback from parents and staff
- Evaluating safeguarding responses to absence

Reporting

The headteacher will provide an annual report to governors on:

- Overall nursery attendance patterns
 - Actions taken to support families
 - Any safeguarding concerns related to attendance
 - The effectiveness of this policy
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11. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
 - Admissions Policy
 - Behaviour Policy
 - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
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12. Further Information and Support

If you have any questions about this policy or need support with your child's attendance, please contact:

Nursery Manager: Miss Costin

Headteacher: Mrs Mulholland

School Office: 01344 424030

Appendix A: Attendance Flowchart for Staff

Child absent and no contact from parent by 9:30am

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Office staff call parent/carers

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Contact made?

YES → Record reason for absence → Monitor for patterns → If concerns arise, nursery lead contacts parents

NO → Call emergency contacts

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Contact made?

YES → Record reason for absence → Inform parents of need to contact nursery directly → Monitor

NO → **Immediately inform DSL**

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DSL assesses safeguarding risk

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Immediate concern?

YES → Police welfare check / Home visit / Contact social care

NO → Continue attempts to contact / Monitor / Consider home visit / Escalate if no contact by end of day

Appendix B: Parent-Friendly Summary

St Margaret Clitherow Nursery - Attendance Information for Parents

Why does attendance matter?

Regular attendance helps your child:

- Learn and develop across all areas
- Build friendships and social skills
- Feel confident and settled
- Be ready for Reception

What we need from you

- ✓ **Call us before 9:00am** if your child won't be in
- ✓ **Phone:** 01344 424030
- ✓ **Email:** secretary@smc-bracknell.com
- ✓ Tell us why they're absent
- ✓ Keep your contact details up to date

What we'll do

- ✓ Call you if we haven't heard from you by 9:30am
- ✓ Work with you if attendance becomes a concern
- ✓ Follow safeguarding procedures if we can't contact you
- ✓ Support you with any difficulties

When to keep your child home

- Temperature/fever
- Vomiting or diarrhoea (keep home for 48 hours after last episode)
- Contagious infection
- Too unwell to join in activities

Need help?

If you're having difficulties with attendance, please talk to us. We're here to help.

Contact: Miss Costin or Mrs Mulholland 01344 424030

Policy approved by Governing Body: 01.09.26

Signed (Chair of Nursery Committee): Mrs Anne Clarke

Signed (Headteacher): Mrs Anne Mulholland

Regular attendance at nursery is important for children's learning, development and wellbeing. We work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure children attend consistently and safely.

Expectations for Parents/Carers

- Parents/carers must notify the nursery before 9:00am if their child will be absent.
- Planned absences (including holidays) must be reported in advance.
- Parents/carers must provide a minimum of two emergency contacts for their child (three preferred).

Nursery Actions on Absence

- We follow up on every non-attendance with a phone call to parents/carers.
- If parents/carers cannot be contacted, we will attempt to reach the emergency contacts provided.
- Where a child is absent for a prolonged period or without explanation, the nursery will consider the child's circumstances, vulnerabilities, and patterns of absence.
- If there are concerns for a child's welfare, we will follow safeguarding procedures, which may include contacting children's social care or requesting a police welfare check.

Safeguarding and Monitoring

- Attendance is monitored regularly.
- Any concerns about patterns of absence or a child's safety will be escalated promptly in line with our Safeguarding Policy.