

2.14 Early years attendance and punctuality policy

'Even when you're very small, good attendance makes a big difference.'

Aim

To promote good attendance and partnership with parents and carers in early years, encouraging good habits early, so that children are life ready.

Rationale

Regular early years attendance is important for all children, even babies, as it is only through regular, consistent routines that children build up the secure attachments they need for healthy development.

Research shows that regular part-time attendance from the age of two in a good-quality early years setting has a lasting impact on children's social development and intellectual attainment throughout school (research Brief RBF 15-03 The Effective Provision of Preschool Education Project: Findings from the Pre-school Period. Sylva et al, IOE, 2003).

Islington's Early Years Foundation Stage profile results (2014) showed a clear correlation between children's attendance and their attainment of the 'good level of development' national standard.

Regular attendance has a positive impact on all aspects of a young child's learning and development. A regular routine supports the young child to feel settled and secure. Unsettled children have higher stress levels which, in turn, prevent them from being able to benefit fully from the learning opportunities available.

We do support families to go on holidays and spend time with their families at this crucial stage of their development, throughout the year. We ask that we are kept fully informed of such absences and encourage families to contribute to Family to encourage a holistic approach to holidays and valuable family time, allowing us to talk to the children about their time away.

Procedures

We promote good attendance and punctuality by:

- ensuring children attend for the expected hours

- requesting that parents call the setting if they are going to be late or absent
- requesting that parents report sickness
- communicating with parents and following up on non-notification of absences as part of promoting good attendance and punctuality
- monitoring children's attendance
- consistently following up on poor attendance and punctuality.

Supporting families

We recognise that sometimes families may need extra support with attendance and punctuality, therefore good communication is essential between families and the key person. The nursery will work with you to support your child's attendance and punctuality. Where children's attendance is poor and not improving, the setting will talk to you about available support, for example implementing bedtime routines and parenting classes.

Safeguarding

We all have a duty to keep children safe and protect them from harm and very poor attendance can be an indication of neglect and be a safeguarding issue.

Withdrawing a place

We will make every effort to support good attendance and punctuality, as suggested above. However, if there are no other indicators of concern or vulnerability and your child has failed to attend for four to six consecutive weeks or more without a justifiable reason, we may withdraw your child's place. We will only do this once all other routes have been exhausted and the setting has provided evidence of this to and sought the approval of the Early Years Service.

The process for formally withdrawing a child's place is as follows:

- We will attempt to contact the family twice weekly to meet with them to seek a justifiable explanation (by telephone or home visit and followed up by email).
- The setting will send a recorded delivery letter during the fourth week to invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the situation and preparing them for the action that could be taken after six weeks.

- The setting will continue to attempt twice-weekly contact via phone and email.
- The setting will send a recorded delivery letter in the final week, explaining that the place will be withdrawn on a specific date.

Transition

If a family decides to move their child to another setting, they should inform us so that we can take them off our register and send on records to the next setting to ensure a smooth transition.

We believe that:

- regular attendance and good punctuality are important for maximising achievement and obtaining the greatest benefit from education
- good relationships with children and their families are vital in encouraging regular attendance and punctuality
- children settle well and want to attend settings when they feel valued and have a sense of belonging
- good habits of attendance and punctuality are key skills for later life.