

Exeter Nursery Schools Federation

Attendance Policy

1. Our Commitment to Every Child

In Exeter Nursery Schools Federation, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life. Regular attendance is the cornerstone of early learning, helping children build strong relationships, develop routines and fully engage with the experiences we offer. This policy reflects our commitment to nurturing each child's development – whatever their age - through consistent, meaningful participation in our Schools.

2. Our Aims

We aim to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where attendance is encouraged and supported. Our approach is guided by the following principles of:

Promoting consistency: by encouraging regular attendance to support children's emotional security and learning progress.

Developing healthy habits and routines for life: having expectations that turning up and being on time is important and matters.

Early Identification: recognising patterns of absence early to offer timely support.

Safeguarding: Ensuring that attendance monitoring contributes to the safety and wellbeing of every child.

Working Together: Building strong partnerships with families to overcome barriers and celebrate progress.

3. Attendance Expectations

We expect all children to attend regularly and on time. We understand that life is unpredictable, that illness and family circumstances may occasionally prevent attendance, and we ask parents to:

- Inform us of absences by 9am.

- Share the reason for absence clearly and honestly.
- Let us know in advance about planned absences, such as holidays or appointments.

4. How We Monitor Attendance

From September 2025, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory requirements we will:

- Track attendance weekly to identify trends and offer support where needed.
- Review patterns of absence to ensure no child is missing out.
- Define 'prolonged absence' (PA): defined as 2 missed sessions without contact.
- Report persistent absence concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and, if necessary, to Devon's Front Door.

If a child is absent and we haven't heard from the family:

- Staff will contact the parent/carer by phone on the second day of absence (first day is we know the child is receiving additional support in school or from an outside agency)
- If no contact is made, they will try again later that day, first by phone, then by email.
- If still unsuccessful, we will:
 - Contact listed emergency contacts.
 - *Conduct a home visit, if appropriate.*

Having made reasonable efforts to contact the parent/carer and still being unable to speak with anyone with parental responsibility we will:

Escalate to the DSL for a safeguarding review

Should the child return to the setting and no credible explanation is given for the absence we will notify the DSL

5. Safeguarding Through Absence

Attendance is more than ticking off a number of children on a register; it can be an indicator of wellbeing. Unexplained or frequent absences may indicate a child or family needs support. We will:

- Follow up on absences promptly.
- Escalate concerns to safeguarding partners when necessary.
- Keep clear, confidential records of attendance and actions taken.

6. Supporting Families

We know that every family's circumstances are unique. When attendance becomes a concern, our first action is always to listen. We will:

- Arrange a friendly, non-judgmental meeting to explore the issues affecting attendance.
- Offer flexible, helpful solutions where possible, such as adjusted hours or support with routines.
- Connect families with external services if additional help is needed.

Our goal is to work together to do what's best for the child.

Signed Position

Date Adopted – September 2025

Date of Review – September 2027