

Plymouth Nursery Schools Federation

Nursery Attendance Policy



Headteacher -



Date: 07/12/2023

Chair of governors



Date: 07/12/2023

Reviewed: Autumn Term 2023

Next Review: Autumn Term 2024

Introduction and Background

The Governors and staff at Plymouth Nursery Schools' Federation (PNSF) are united in their belief that regular attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Helping them to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Although we recognise that attending nursery is not statutory, we believe good attendance is essential if children are to be settled and take full advantage of the learning and development opportunities available to them. At a young age, continuity and consistency are important contributors to a child's well-being and progress. We also believe that a good attendance routine at nursery sets the pattern for when they move into Foundation stage and their school journey begins.

Our Attendance Policy aims are:

1. To create a culture where good attendance is 'normality' and valued.
2. To ensure that all of our children are able to achieve their maximum potential, academically, physically, socially and emotionally.
3. To be consistent in the implementation of our policy and procedures.

Promoting Regular Attendance

PNSF values all children. As set out in this policy we will work with families to identify the barriers to achieving and maintaining excellent attendance and offer the right service at the right time to try to resolve any difficulties. We believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school' and settings' vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The Safeguarding and Attendance Senior Leader (Head of School, supported by the leadership team and administration team, will monitor attendance and use attendance data to identify any patterns of concern. They will also celebrate success! Attendance concerns will be raised with parents if the reasons are not known by the nursery.

To support good attendance, and safeguarding, at PNSF we:

- Ensure the nurseries are welcoming and every child feels a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Ensure the school sites are open at the stated times.
- Ensure the regular, efficient, and accurate recording of attendance is completed by the nursery staff each day. This further supports our approach to safeguarding within the school.
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our Dojo messages.
- Ensure all school holiday dates including non-pupil days are clearly marked and displayed on our school website.
- Report to parents/carers at least annually on their child's attendance and within the annual report.
- Safeguarding is taken seriously and we will always contact you if you have not made contact with us regarding your child's absence.

PNSF will always work in partnership with our parents and carers

PNSF recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life and their lived experience. This may be related to problems at home or in nursery. Parents/carers should inform the nursery of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in nursery, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the nursery to identify any additional early help that may be required.

Safeguarding is a priority, concerns for any child at any time will be reported to the Designated Senior Leads for Child Protection (Head of School). We will always follow Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and our Child Protection Policy.

Some children are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, children who are vulnerable, have a medical need or EHCP plan will be monitored and supported in the nursery. At PNSF we will proactively identify and follow up on a child's non-attendance and gather information about the child. This will result in taking early action to prevent non-attendance developing and monitoring the impact of targeted support.

Absence Procedures

Dojo

Absence can also be reported using the our Dojo messaging system which is an efficient and secure system for reporting your child's absence due to illness. On enrollment we can make sure you sign up to this free app which will also keep you up to date with any news and events.

Notification by phone

Please contact the nursery by telephone at the earliest convenience to let us know if your child is poorly and not attending the nursery.

Plym Bridge: 786444

Ham Drive: 366389

We thoroughly monitor all absences, and the reasons that are given.

Procedures:

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to notify the Nursery through Dojo or by phone or email if their child will be absent for any reason e.g. illness, holiday, etc. If you know holidays in advance it is greatly appreciated to let us know these.

If your child attends a morning or full day session, please inform us by 8:30am of any absence or by 12:30pm for an afternoon session ideally via Dojo. Messages of absence from parents will be passed onto the Nursery Teacher. If we haven't heard from you a member of staff will contact you by telephone to ascertain the reason for absence. If we cannot reach you, we will leave a message and send an email. We will also keep a record of non-attendance and of our contact attempts.

If there is no contact after one week a home visit may be complete and / or a letter will be sent to the family. If necessary, an appointment will be made with the Nursery Teacher to discuss the matter. If contact cannot be made through phone calls and home visits, we do have a duty of care and therefore may refer to outside agencies based on safeguarding concerns. If after one month the child has not attended nursery and a reasonable reason has not been shared, the child's name will be removed from the Nursery register and the place allocated to another child on the waiting list. If you claim Me2 or EYFE funding, long or regular absences may affect your entitlement. We would need to contact the Plymouth Early Years and Childcare Service. We would notify you when we have done this.

If a child is absent from nursery the parent / carer (or other adult living at the premises) must follow these procedures:

- Contact the nursery on the first day of absence before 8:30am. You can do this:
 - By using the Dojo app
 - In person by calling in to the school office
 - By telephoning the school (the school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call)
 - By emailing the school at reception@plymbridge.net or ham.drive.nursery@plymouth.gov.uk
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8:30am using any of the methods above
- Contact the Head of School if you require advice or support and they will sign post you to further help depending on your needs.
- Ensure that your child returns to nursery as soon as possible.
- When staff complete home visits, if they cannot make contact with you and your child, then they have the right to ask neighbours if they have seen you. Again, this is to ensure the safety of your child. No personal details will be shared and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.
- We will always work in a supportive way with all our nursery families and try to find a way to help and support getting your child into school.
- We will create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance
- We can and will contact outside agencies, for example medical care, social emotional support, family support agencies if it is felt that this support is needed to help improve attendance for the child/ren.

Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt sessions and, if a child misses the start of the session, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and miss important messages from their nursery teacher.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off nursery because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend nursery. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the nursery, the parents/carers and the child. If a parent/carer thinks their child is reluctant to attend nursery, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support.

All agencies who work with children have a duty to support the Local Authority in ensuring all children are safe and looked after appropriately.

It is our responsibility as a nursery to work with the LA Education and Inclusion team, by making referrals as we feel is necessary and appropriate.

Other Policies supporting attendance.

Relationships

Policy Behaviour

Policy SEND Offer

Safeguarding

Policy.

PNSF expectations – Parents/carers:

- i Parents should ensure that their children arrive at nursery on time, with the correct equipment and suitably dressed for the time of the year.
- ii Parents should support the nursery by avoiding, if possible, non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during term time.
- iii It is the parents' responsibility to inform the nursery of the reason for a child's absence on the first day of absence and in line with the school's procedures for informing of absence.
- iv All unexplained attendances will be monitored, and parents will be kept informed about any attendance concerns relating to their own child. Parents are expected to attend meetings when requested and support the nursery in responding to ongoing attendance concerns.

PNSF expectations - Nursery Staff

The Nursery Staff are the key staff members in promoting regular punctual attendance they will:

- i. provide a good example by always being punctual to nursery and meeting children at the door
– providing a welcoming environment;
- ii. keep an accurate and up-to-date register of attendance;
- iii. follow the Attendance Policy procedures
- iv. maintain swift action and effective communication with the School Attendance Leader on all attendance matters concerning any nursery pupil.
- v. build a welcoming atmosphere in the nursery and provide support as necessary when children return after an absence.

PNSF expectations - Leadership Team.

The Leadership Team takes responsibility for monitoring the attendance of children and regularly promotes the importance of attendance and punctuality. They will:

- i. ensure that their team is aware of their responsibilities with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality and adherence to the attendance policy and procedures;
- ii. monitor and track the attendance of vulnerable groups;
- iii. monitor the attendance of individual class groups, following up with irregular patterns of absenteeism that are not being effectively addressed;
- iv. have attendance as a regular item during Inclusion meetings;
- v. ensure contact is made with parents of poor attendees – always placing support before sanction