



# **Nursery Attendance Policy**

**Autumn 2025**



**WHINLESS DOWN  
ACADEMY TRUST**

## **The Legal Framework**

There are no legal obligations to attend an Early Years setting but, once the child is registered with the nursery there is:

- a duty of care upon the nursery to ensure that the child is safe
- to achieve value for money – each child is funded by the Local Authority via Early Years Entitlement funding.

## **Introduction**

Vale View Nursery believes that good attendance is essential if children are to be settled and take full advantage of the learning and development opportunities available to them at nursery. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late. In addition, we believe that continuity and consistency from such a young age are important contributors to a child's wellbeing and progress. A welcoming, well organised learning environment that supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy nursery and attend regularly.

Good attendance (above 96%) and punctuality promotes good outcomes for children. In a small minority of cases, good attendance practice may also lead to the earlier identification of more serious concerns for a child and may have a vital part to play in keeping a child or other family members safe from harm.

## **Our Aims**

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To create a culture where good attendance is 'normality' and valued
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive
- To be consistent in the implementation of our policy and procedures

## **Attendance Expectations**

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends nursery and arrives on time for their session and is picked up on time.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend nursery in appropriate clothing and footwear.
- Telephone or email to inform the nursery or school office on the first day of absence for their child.
- Provide a written or verbal explanation of absence.
- Work in partnership with the nursery and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.
- Parents must inform the nursery in writing if a child is going on holiday during term time, sending an email giving dates and reason for absence. This is especially necessary if they are on holiday during Head Count week.

## **Absence procedure**

Parents are required to contact the nursery or the school office before 9 am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence, including specifying illness, and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one day.

Vale View 01304 202821 ext 3

[nursery@vale-view.kent.sch.uk](mailto:nursery@vale-view.kent.sch.uk) or [office@vale-view.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@vale-view.kent.sch.uk)

Where expected duration of illness/absence is unknown, parents are expected to contact the nursery on each day of absence. For example, in the case of a known/fixed hospital stay, we would not expect a phone call each day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by 9 am to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend nursery.

The nursery will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.

This will happen for both the morning and afternoon session.

If the nursery is unable to make contact, we may make a home visit to follow up on absence. If we are still unable to establish any contact for a prolonged period of time or there are any safeguarding concerns, we may request a police welfare check or complete a referral to Children's Social Care.

The nursery will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the nursery reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

No refund will be given in the event of a child's absence due to illness, holiday or any other reason. Days that are reserved but not attended cannot be reallocated to other days. If your child is absent or on holiday during headcount week or when the funding form needs to be signed, we will ask for an email to be sent confirming the reason for the absence and that they will attend on their return.

## **Registers**

The nursery uses SIMS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each nursery session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Absence code will be recorded in line with the school policy.

## **Notice of a Child Leaving the Nursery or Reducing their Hours**

We ask for 1 months' notice in writing of a child leaving a non-funded place. In the instance that a child leaves a non-funded place without the required notice period having been given, all outstanding fees including those in lieu of notice will be payable immediately.

Although notice is not required of a child leaving a funded place, we would appreciate 1 months' notice in order to allow us to plan accordingly.

If a child has been absent for a prolonged period and after one month there has been no contact, the child's name will be removed from the register and the place allocated to a child on the waiting list.

## **Absence monitoring**

Nursery and administrative staff will also:

- monitor weekly attendance data
- promptly inform the Headteacher or EYFS Leading Practitioner if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
- produce basic termly data for analysis
- contact parents/carers by letter, if necessary
- ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy

It is particularly important to pay close attention to the patterns of attendance for potentially vulnerable groups of children, including,

- children who are known to social care or the criminal justice system
- children with immigration issues
- children who may be subject to honour based violence, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation
- children facing difficult family circumstances e.g. housing problems, bereavement, separation/divorce
- children from families experiencing some degree of financial hardship, e.g., in receipt of 2yr old funding or Early Years Pupil Premium funding (EYPP)
- children with additional needs, learning difficulties or disabilities
- children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) or from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) families
- children about whom other agencies have raised concerns, including those supported through Early Help

Parents of children whose attendance is inconsistent and generally poor will be contacted by the EYFS Leading Practitioner or the Headteacher and their future attendance monitored. If there is cause for concern, the Health Visiting service and/or Multi-Agency Team may be contacted in order to ascertain if family support may be needed. In more urgent cases, social care may be contacted.

## **Good attendance habits**

- Good nursery attendance builds in young children the idea that getting up and going to nursery or school is simply what you do.
- Children who attend all their sessions develop a feel for the rhythm of the week and gain a sense of security from the regular routine, even when the actual pattern or focus of their learning or activity may vary widely from week to week.
- Young children find it easier to build and sustain a range of social relationships when they regularly attend nursery.
- Regular times arranged with parents help to develop a secure attachment within the nursery.
- For some families, particularly at times of stress, the child's regular attendance at a setting allows parents to get other things done and helps them enjoy spending time with the child when he or she is at home.
- Children who rarely miss sessions at an early years setting and arrive on time are more likely to feel good about themselves. This is because they know what goes on and what to expect, feel more confident with the adults and the other children and have more opportunities to be valued and praised for their own special contribution.
- Children who regularly miss sessions or are generally late, can frequently experience a sense of having to try a little bit harder just to understand what is going on and what other children are talking about or doing.
- Regular attendance, on time, helps many young children to separate from their parents or carers at the start of the day and settle more readily into daily life in their setting.
- Children learn in many different ways through play with others and through being in the company of staff who actively support their learning and development.
- Underachievement is often linked to lower attendance. For some older students this is linked to a steadily deteriorating trend in attendance which is traceable right back to their Early Years setting.
- Good attendance is important for every child, but especially those for whom specific factors make them more vulnerable to disengagement or underachievement. Most children are well supported by their families and continue to thrive, whatever their background or circumstances. However, there are some factors in children's lives which make it more likely that they will experience some difficulty.