



Taywood Nursery School

Attendance Policy

2024-2025

Agreed by Governing Board on 27th March 2024

Policy will be reviewed by 31st March 2025

Introduction

Education Secretary Gillian Keegan said:

“Our fantastic schools and teachers unlock children’s imagination, potential and social skills which is why improving attendance is my number one priority.”

At Taywood Nursery School, we know that our children gain the greatest benefit from their education, when they have good attendance. It is vital that they attend regularly, and every child should be on time for their sessions, unless they have an unavoidable reason to be absent. Being on time is as important as attending regularly, as group times are planned from the start of the session.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Government research shows a direct link between attendance and attainment and good attenders also make better progress socially, learn to work with others, and are better prepared for the transition to primary, secondary school and, eventually, higher education, training and employment.

As a nursery school, we support the DfE guidance to improve attendance across the sector. Our attendance target this year is 90%, but all parents/guardians and children should strive to achieve 100% attendance if they can.

Responsibilities and expectations

Nursery education is non-compulsory, however, as a school, we aim to prepare parents and children for their legal duty of compulsory primary school attendance.

Parents should know the times the school day starts and finishes and when the register closes, the processes for requesting leave, and the process for informing school of the reason for unexpected absence (as follows).

- **If your child is going to be absent, parents must inform school as soon as possible and at the latest by 9:00am / 12:30pm on the first day of absence by calling school on 01282 425601, or reporting on School Spider. Please do not email the Headteacher.**
- Parents must also ensure that school has up-to-date contact information for themselves and emergency contacts.

School

The Head Teacher will:

- Lead on giving attendance a high profile.
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and protected time allocated to discharge those responsibilities. The Headteacher will work with the Extended Services Coordinator to raise the profile of attendance.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school confirms to statutory requirements regarding attendance (appropriate for nursery schools).
- Consider each request for leave against the school's criteria and make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence.
- Provide regular reports to the governing body on school attendance, including persistent absence and vulnerable groups.

The Attendance Lead will follow the procedures below:

Current Procedures:

- First day response: contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided and record this information accordingly. A phone call will be made to parents. This would be carried out by the office staff.
- Update attendance registers daily.
- Comments used in SIMS to record absence reasons (office staff).
- Document persistent absences on CPOMS.
- Extended Services Coordinator will regularly monitor every half term and analyse data to identify attendance concerns and to target attendance improvement support for those who need it most, particularly vulnerable groups.
- Attendance concern letters sent home to parents.
- Attendance overview provided half termly to the teacher and room leaders to support planning & assessment files.
- Attendance meetings held with Headteacher/Extended Services Coordinator for poor attendance.
- Promote regular attendance through the school newsletter.

All school staff will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and a safe learning environment.
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to poor attendance and punctuality.
- Adhere to the procedures in place within school to promote good attendance.
- Promote the link between attendance and educational attainment to children and parents.
- Add attendance overview half termly to support planning & assessment files.
- Complete attendance registers in accordance with the legislation (Primary Schools, however, we support good practice) and under the direction of the head teacher.
- Discuss attendance concerns at an early stage with parents.

Governors will:

- Agree an attendance policy and review it annually.
- Agree targets for attendance at Taywood Nursery School.
- Keep up to date with current guidance.
- Where the school is not meeting its attendance targets, or when the governors believe there is cause for concern, instigate a review of school's attendance procedures.
- Authorise the head teacher (or other designated person) to make decisions regarding leave of absence requests.
- Work with the head teacher in establishing equitable and consistent criteria against which leave requests will be considered.

Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers. As a school, we will always work with parents (and other agencies, as appropriate) to understand the reasons underlying absence.

Authorised absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. If school has followed its attendance procedures and a pupil continues to have unauthorised absences, the school will make contact offering a 'support first' approach. However, we may need to take the decision to remove the child's place if non-attendance continues.

We discourage:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which are not explained satisfactorily.
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed.
- Days off for shopping, birthdays or looking after other children.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed by the head teacher.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to school as soon as possible to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. As a school, we will always work with parents (and external agencies as appropriate) to understand and address the reasons behind absence.

Persistent Absence (PA)

Persistent absence is when a child misses 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason, authorised and unauthorised (including illness, exclusion, holiday, etc). Absence at this level will damage any child's educational prospects and we expect parents' fullest support and co-operation to address this.

At Taywood Nursery School, we monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any child whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be prioritised and parents will be informed of this promptly. Children who are persistent absentees are tracked and monitored carefully and the attendance procedures below will be followed.

Leave during term time

Maintained schools cannot authorise any leave in term time other than in exceptional circumstances. Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their education and progress as much as any other absence. As a maintained nursery school, we discourage parent from taking a child out of school during term time. If leave is being requested for a holiday or extended leave abroad, we require a written request by letter or email, address to the head teacher (head@taywood.lancs.sch.uk) before making any bookings.

Leave of absence in term time will not be authorised unless a request for leave has been made in advance by a parent with whom the child normally resides.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised.

Religious absence

School will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, eg Eid, and this will be marked as code R in the register. The day authorised will be that set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member.

Parents must request any additional leave in advance and this can only be authorised if the head teacher agrees that exceptional circumstances apply; this would be marked in the register as code C.

Registration

Attendance registration

Morning registration is between 8.45am and 9.00am.

Afternoon registration is between 12:15pm and 12:30pm.

The sessions start at **8.45am or 12:15pm**. Children are expected to be on the premises at that time and that is when the registration period starts (ie when the register is taken and remains open).

When the attendance register has been taken it remains open until 9:00am in the morning and 12:30pm in the afternoon. Any child who arrives after this time will be marked as late.

School finishes at 11:45am and 3:15pm.

Late arrival

When a child arrives late, the parent/ person dropping off the child must go straight to the school office to inform them of their arrival.

Punctuality

We encourage punctuality. If your child misses the start of the session, they miss on all important transitions with their peers and may miss their group times. The Extended Services Coordinator will monitor late arrivals and will contact parents to offer 'support first'. Our aim is to work with families to ensure the best outcome for the children.

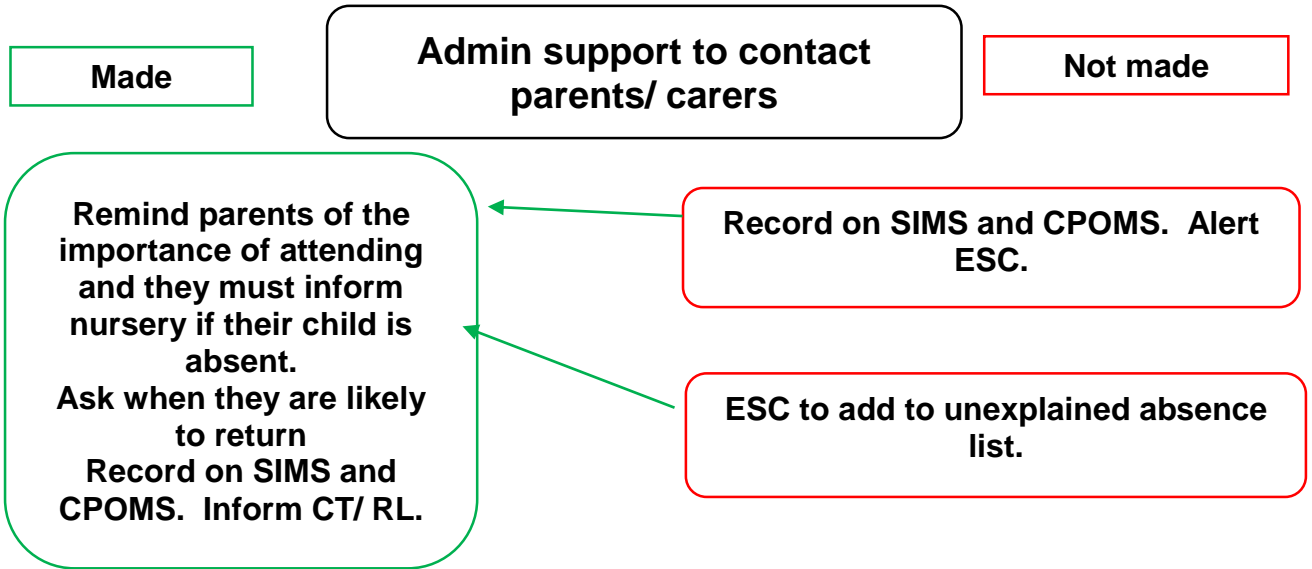
5 School attendance procedures

First day of absence

Parents can contact the school office, or report an absence on School Spider. If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will telephone you on the first day of absence to find out what the reason is and when your child is expected to return. If we are unable to contact you, we will approach your emergency contacts and, if necessary, make a home visit. Please note that such home visits may be unannounced.

Absence Procedure (when parent has not been in contact)

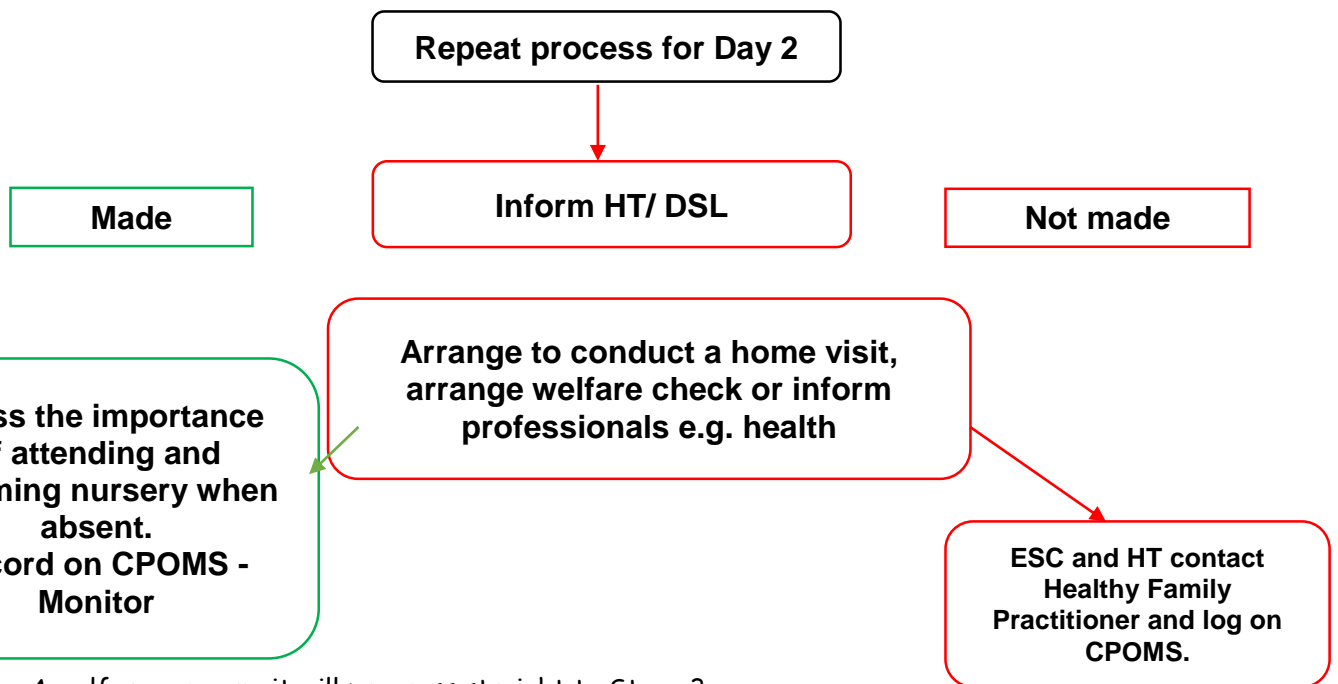
Stage 1 - Absence Day 1



Stage 2 - Absence Day 2

Repeat process for Day 1 for all contacts if necessary.

Stage 3 - Absence Day 3



A welfare concern, it will progress straight to Stage 3.

Attendance concerns

The new DfE guidance (February 2024) states that a 'support first' approach will be used to support children and families to tackle barriers to attendance. We have a full time Extended Services Coordinator who supports attendance, liaises with other agencies and leads on EHAs.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with us in resolving any attendance problems together. Our Extended Services Coordinator will:

- Make contact to discuss concerns about their child's attendance
- Make a home visit/ invitation into school to discuss concerns
- Instigate an Early Help Assessment (EHA) process and/or referral to other agencies and services for further support
- Draw up a parental agreement discussed to identify barriers to regular attendance and support/targets implemented for improvements

However, if concerns persist, school will use the following procedures and interventions, as required, to support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality:

At any stage, we may seek advice from our School Attendance Consultant.

Children with medical needs who have difficulty attending school

Government guidance on supporting children at school with medical conditions emphasises the role of governing bodies in ensuring that children with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other children. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these children, whether their condition is short or long term.

School will work with parents and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be in the form of specific support or resources used within school or by sourcing appropriate provision at another establishment. When education is to be provided at an alternative location, this should always be done via the use of a direction

When a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period, the ESC work with the family, key staff alongside other support services, to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

Children refusing to attend school

At Taywood Nursery School, we believe that every child has a right to an education, and we would not accept "school refusal" as a reason for non-attendance. In such cases, we will work with parents to identify the reasons why a child may be reluctant to attend school, and ensure the child is further supported with any issues.

Promotion of good attendance

School will promote and incentivise attendance by awarding half termly certificates and updates on the weekly newsletters.