



"To make children's first experience of school secure, happy, positive and fun."

Hillside Nursery School Policy

Introduction

Hillside Nursery is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment that enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. We recognise the importance of establishing regular patterns of attendance for the children if they are to fully benefit from their time in Nursery. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should arrive at nursery, on time, every day the nursery is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

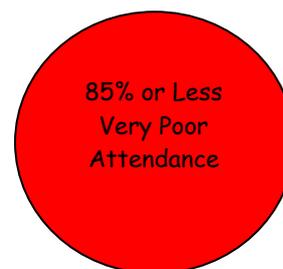
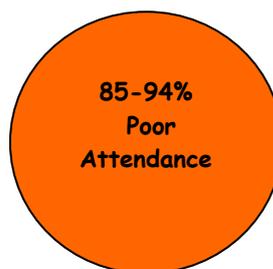
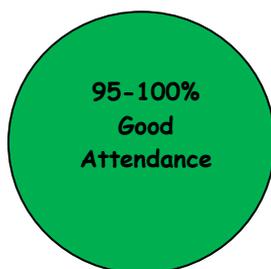
It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why regular attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Although nursery education is not compulsory we encourage punctual attendance so that your child to achieve the best possible outcomes from their nursery education.

What is Good Attendance?

Good 95-100% attendance



At 90% attendance = 4 whole weeks of nursery MISSED!!!

Promoting regular attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- report to you termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- reward good or improving attendance;
- carry out transition work with pupils moving between nursery and reception;
- further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school;
- make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors;

Understanding types of absence

Every session's absence from nursery has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

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

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school after the register has closed;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed;
- days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher;

Whilst any child may be off nursery because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend nursery please talk to your child's Key Person who will work with you to ensure your child feels happy and secure to come to nursery. It is better to speak to nursery staff in order to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home, which gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more of their schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be prioritised and parents will be informed of this promptly.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either by phone or you can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- invite you in to discuss the situation with your Key Person and/or head teacher if absences persist;

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Lateness

Poor punctuality means that your child misses the start of the session and even the start of the group time activity. Children arriving late disrupt activities, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

How we manage lateness:

In the morning the nursery session starts at **8.55 am**, the afternoon session starts at **12.40pm**, prompt attendance is expected.

The register will be taken at the door by a member of staff at the start of each Nursery session. The register will close at 9.15 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. If a child arrives at Nursery after the register has closed they will be marked as arriving late (L). If a child is not attending, the parent should contact the school as soon as possible.

Un-notified absences will be followed up by telephone enquiries by the School Administrator to ascertain the reason. If the parent responds to the telephone call, then the absence becomes notified.

The aim of our welcoming and supportive ethos is to provide the parents with every opportunity to communicate with Nursery so we can work together to enable the child to attend Nursery punctually and on a regular basis. However, if this is unsuccessful and there are frequent unexplained sustained absences the Head teacher will arrange a meeting with the parents/carers so that strategies can be put in place to improve the child's attendance. If attendance still continues to be unacceptably poor, without an adequate explanation and every reasonable step has been taken to ensure attendance by the school, then the Head teacher will refer the matter to the School Governors.

Leave in term time

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away during term time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent of residence using the 'Request for leave of absence' form, available in reception and from the school office. Requests will only be authorised if the circumstances surrounding the request are considered, by the school, to be exceptional.

In considering the request we will also look at various factors such as:

- The timing of the request:
when a pupil is just starting nursery, absences should be avoided as this is an important transition period when your child needs to settle into their new routine as quickly and as happily as possible;
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence;
- where a pupil's attendance rate is already a cause for concern, or could become concerning, as a result of taking leave;

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

As Hillside Nursery is a popular and busy school, parents risk losing their child's place on roll if the pupil does not return on the agreed return date. Re-admission cannot be guaranteed as the place may have been issued to a child on our waiting list.

Religious Absence

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, e.g. Eid, (i.e. the day set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member) and this will be marked as 'R' in the register.

Parents must request any additional leave in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

Pupils who are unable to attend nursery for medical reasons

The introduction of new statutory guidance on 1st September 2014 places much more emphasis on the role of governing bodies in ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils; whether their condition is short or long term. The school will work with parents and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health.

Roles and responsibilities for attendance matters at Hillside Nursery School

Parents:

- ensure children attend regularly and punctually;
- contact school on 1st day of absence;
- avoid any leave in term time, but apply in advance using form if the reason for leave is unavoidable;
- attendance at meetings in school;
- participation in parenting contracts and common assessment framework, and cooperate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies;

Pupils:

- acknowledge behaviour needed out of school, e.g. early bedtime
- attend school/registration punctually
- speak to parents/teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance
- cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies

Headteacher:

- take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school;
- ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters;
- ensure adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities;
- take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance;
- consider each request for leave against the school's criteria, decide whether some or all of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision;
- where there is ambiguity regarding an absence, make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence or to request further evidence to support the decision making process;

School administrator:

- first day response: contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided and log this information accordingly;
- input and update the attendance registers;
- regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups;
- in liaison with the head teacher, regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents;

All School Staff

- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment;
- to be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance;
- to see pupils' attendance as the responsibility of **all** school staff;

Governors

- adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly;
- monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy;
- set aspirational targets for improving the school's attendance figures;
- authorise the head teacher to consider and make decisions regarding leave of absence requests;
- work with the head teacher in establishing criteria against which leave requests will be considered. This is important to ensure the process is equitable and consistent;

Nursery targets

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for Hillside Nursery School is 90% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to your child's progress.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in newsletters and we ask for your full support. Should a child's attendance for a term be less than 85% attendance parents will be informed through a letter. If attendance continues to be unacceptably poor, without an adequate explanation and every reasonable step has been taken to ensure attendance by the school, then the Head teacher will refer the matter to the School Governors.

All nursery staff are committed to working with parents and their children, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.