

## ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE POLICY – SEPTEMBER 2025

**Effective Date:** September 2025

**Next Review Date:** September 2026

### 1. Policy Statement

At Eaton Mill Nursery, we believe that regular attendance is essential for children's development, well-being, and safety. While nursery attendance is not statutory, consistent routines support the settling-in process and allow staff to monitor a child's welfare effectively. In accordance with the EYFS 2025 reforms, this policy outlines our rigorous procedures for monitoring attendance and responding to unexplained absences.

### 2. Statutory Requirements for Emergency Contacts

In line with 2025/26 legal requirements, we maintain the following:

- **Emergency Contacts:** A minimum of **2 emergency contact numbers** must be provided for each child.
- **Verification:** These contacts must be reachable during nursery hours. Parents/carers are responsible for updating the Nursery immediately if any contact details change.
- **Suitability:** Emergency contacts should be individuals authorised to collect the child and capable of making decisions in the parents'/carers' absence.

### 3. Procedures for Reporting Absence

Parents/carers must notify the Nursery of any absence by **9:00AM** (or 1:00PM for afternoon-only sessions) on the first day of absence.

- **Contact Method:** Please call **01908 373621** or email [admin@eatonmillnursery.co.uk](mailto:admin@eatonmillnursery.co.uk)
- **Information Required:** Child's full name, reason for absence, and expected date of return.
- **Illness:** If the absence is due to illness, parents/carers must state the symptoms to help the nursery monitor for infectious outbreaks (e.g., scarlet fever, hand-foot-and-mouth).

### 4. Management of Unexplained Absence

If a child is absent without prior notification, the Nursery will follow a "First Day Response" protocol:

1. If a child has not arrived by the end of registration, we will call the primary parent/carer.
2. If two consecutive sessions are missed without contact, all emergency contacts on file will be contacted.

*If the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan, a Child In Need Plan, or has an assigned Social Worker, we will notify the Milton Keynes Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) of absence.*

3. If no contact has been made by the third consecutive absence, we will send a formal email to parents/carers requesting an urgent update on the child's whereabouts.
  4. If we are unable to make contact after **3 consecutive sessions**, a **home visit** may be deemed appropriate to complete a welfare check on the child.
  5. If there is still no contact, we will contact the local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- **Non-vulnerable status changes:** The moment a child goes missing for three days with zero contact, they are treated as "at risk" until proven otherwise.

- **Police Welfare Check:** If we have a genuine concern for the immediate safety of the family (e.g. we can see mail piling up or the car is in the drive, but no one answers), we will call 101 or 999 to request a police welfare check.

## 5. Prolonged or Persistent Absence

- **Prolonged Absence:** Defined as 3 consecutive sessions (or 2 full days) of absence without a valid explanation or contact from the family.
- **Patterns of Absence:** The DSL reviews attendance logs monthly to identify patterns (e.g. missing every Friday). These patterns will be discussed with parents/carers to identify if Early Help or additional support is needed.

## 6. Holidays and Leave of Absence

While we understand the value of family time, we request that parents/carers notify us of any holidays or planned leave of absence.

### Protecting Your Funded Place

It is important to note that while nursery-age children are not subject to the same "Fixed Penalty Notice" laws as school-age children, their attendance directly impacts their funding.

- **Attendance Requirements:** To maintain a funded place, children must regularly access their entitlement.
- **Withdrawal of Funding:** Persistent absence or prolonged absence will result in the **withdrawal of a funded place**. Should attendance fall below 63% then parents/carers lose government funding and become liable for fees. This ensures that government-funded spaces are utilised by children who are actively attending and benefiting from the provision.

## 7. Punctuality

Late arrivals are recorded. Persistent lateness can be a sign of "neglect of routine" or family stress.

Consistent lateness (defined as more than 3 times per month) will trigger a formal review meeting with the DSL to discuss support required.