

Attendance and Registration Policy for EYFS Pupils (0 to 5 years)

Aims

This policy sets out Forfar Education's commitment to promoting strong attendance and punctuality for pupils in the Early Years across its schools and nursery settings. It applies to children from 6 months to 5 years and reflects the safeguarding expectations within the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework effective from September 2026, alongside the Department for Education's statutory guidance "Working Together to Improve School Attendance".

The policy explains how registration is managed, how attendance is monitored and how unexplained, irregular or prolonged absence is followed up. Although attendance in an early years setting is not compulsory until the start of the term following a child's fifth birthday, the setting recognises that patterns of absence may indicate wider welfare or safeguarding concerns. For this reason, staff will work proactively with families and, where necessary, local partners to support children's regular attendance and ensure that they are safe and well.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors is responsible for ensuring that Forfar Education meets its statutory duties in relation to attendance, including the maintenance of accurate attendance records and appropriate collaboration with local partners where attendance-related concerns arise. The Board delegates responsibility for implementation of this policy to Heads of School and Nursery Managers. Heads of School and Nursery Managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently within their setting. This includes overseeing attendance procedures, supporting staff to monitor individual pupil attendance, reporting attendance data to governance structures where required and working with families where barriers to attendance have been identified. Particular attention should be given to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, children with a social worker, children who are looked after and children with an education, health and care plan where attendance concerns may require additional coordination with external agencies. Each school and nursery will identify an Attendance Champion or delegated lead for attendance. This person will work with the wider pastoral and safeguarding team to ensure that attendance procedures are followed, attendance information is reviewed, staff training needs are identified and appropriate intervention or support is put in place where concerns emerge.

Children Below Statutory School Age

While attendance is not mandatory for children below statutory school age, regular poor attendance, unexplained absence or prolonged absence must be taken seriously. Such patterns may indicate safeguarding or welfare concerns and must be followed up by the school or nursery.

The setting manager, Attendance Champion or delegated attendance lead will follow up absence on the same day. Where a child is absent without notification, or where absence is prolonged, staff must attempt to contact parents and carers and, where necessary, alternative emergency contacts. Staff must consider the child's personal circumstances, known vulnerabilities, patterns and trends in absence, and any existing safeguarding or welfare concerns when deciding whether absence should be escalated. All contact attempts, responses, outcomes and decisions must be recorded. If contact cannot be made, or if the absence raises concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be consulted. Where safeguarding concerns are identified, staff must follow the setting's safeguarding procedures, including referral to local children's social care and/or requesting a police welfare check where appropriate.

Registration Process

Each school and nursery will maintain an accurate attendance register. Attendance will be recorded for morning registration, afternoon registration and, where applicable, before-school and after-school care. School registers are completed in iSAMS and nursery registers are completed on Blossom. If the system is unavailable, attendance must be recorded manually and entered into the appropriate system as soon as practicable.

Morning registration is completed between 8:55am and 9:00am by the Class Teacher or Room Leader. Afternoon registration takes place between 12:30pm and 1:30pm, depending on the age group. Attendance records must accurately reflect whether a child is present, absent or late, using the correct regulatory codes where these apply.

Absences must be recorded promptly after each registration period. For Reception children, absences are recorded in iSAMS, and for Nursery children, absences are recorded on Blossom. If an absence has not been reported by 9:00am, parents must be contacted on the same day to confirm the reason for absence and to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing. Where there is no valid explanation, or contact cannot be made, the DSL must be informed and safeguarding procedures followed.

Safeguarding Considerations

Registration is a key safeguarding process. Staff must follow up absence in a timely manner and must not assume that a child is safe simply because they are below statutory school age or because attendance is not compulsory. If a child is absent for a prolonged period, or is absent without notification, staff must attempt to contact parents, carers and alternative emergency contacts. Staff must consider patterns and trends in absence alongside the child's vulnerability, the parent's or carer's vulnerability, home circumstances and any existing safeguarding or welfare concerns. Where absence remains unexplained, or where the circumstances raise concern, the DSL must be consulted and referrals made in line with safeguarding procedures.

Where there are already safeguarding or welfare concerns, or where a child is subject to a child protection plan, poor, irregular, unexplained or prolonged attendance must be reported to the child's social care worker without delay. Actions taken, explanations received, outcomes and escalation decisions must be clearly recorded.

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The Role of Parents

Parents play an important role in helping the school or nursery maintain accurate attendance records and support children's wellbeing. If a child is unable to attend because of illness or any other reason, parents should inform the school or nursery as soon as possible and ideally before the start of the day. Notification should be made through the setting's designated communication channels, such as telephone, email or parent portal.

Parents must keep emergency contact details up to date so that the setting can make prompt contact if an absence is unexplained. In cases of prolonged absence, parents may be asked to provide medical documentation or further information. Regular communication between parents and the setting helps ensure that appropriate support is in place for the child on return and enables the setting to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities.

If a child is absent without reason, or is absent for a prolonged period and contact cannot be made with parents or carers, the setting will contact emergency contacts and implement safeguarding procedures where required.

Late Arrivals

Children arriving after the registration period will be marked as late. The register will be updated in the appropriate system and the correct codes will be applied where relevant. Repeated lateness will be monitored and may be followed up with parents where it forms part of a wider pattern of attendance concern.

Educational Visits and After-School Clubs

Children attending educational visits or after-school clubs must be registered at the start of each activity. Attendance should be checked against the expected list of children, and any discrepancy must be investigated promptly so that all children are accounted for.

Absence and Leave Requests

Absences should be reported to the school office or nursery team as soon as possible. Requests for non-routine leave of absence, including leaving before the end of term, should be made with at least one week's notice wherever possible. The Head of School, Nursery Manager or their delegated deputy is responsible for considering absence requests in exceptional circumstances.

Follow-up on Absences

If a pupil is absent and the reason has not been communicated by 9:30am, the school office or nursery team will contact parents and, where necessary, additional emergency contacts to establish the reason for absence. If the absence remains unexplained by 10:00am, the pastoral team and DSL must be informed. All contact attempts, explanations received and decisions made must be recorded.

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Monitoring Attendance

Attendance records will be reviewed regularly to identify patterns of absence, repeated lateness, unexplained absence, prolonged absence and any attendance concerns linked to safeguarding or welfare. Where a school-aged pupil's attendance falls below 90%, or where a pupil is frequently late, intervention will be initiated. Attendance will also be monitored monthly by the Attendance Champion or pastoral lead, with reports provided to the Safeguarding Governor where required. For children below statutory school age, professional judgement will be used to identify concerning patterns and to decide whether further support or safeguarding escalation is needed. Staff should consider the child's age, routine, known vulnerabilities, family circumstances and any wider welfare information when reviewing attendance.

Working with Local Partners

Forfar Education and its schools and early years settings work with local authorities to ensure that attendance matters are addressed in accordance with the law. This includes making required notifications when a pupil's name is added to or removed from the school register and providing attendance returns to the local authority for pupils with unauthorised absences or extended illness where required.

Breach of this Policy

Failure to comply with this Attendance and Registration Policy may result in disciplinary action. Schools and nurseries are required to maintain accurate attendance records and to follow up absences as part of their duty of care and safeguarding responsibilities.

Legislative Framework and Further Guidance

This policy should be read alongside the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework effective from September 2026, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, Children Missing Education guidance and wider legislation governing pupil registration, attendance and safeguarding. This includes relevant provisions within the Education Act 1996, the Education Act 2002, the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Policy Owner	Nursery Manager
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