

At Busy Bee Preschool, we are committed to ensuring that all children are kept safe, their wellbeing is actively promoted, and they do not miss out on their entitlements or opportunities. Regular attendance is a key factor in securing positive outcomes for children — socially, emotionally, and educationally.

While good attendance supports learning and development, it can also serve as an important indicator of a child's overall wellbeing. In a small number of cases, consistent attendance may help us identify emerging concerns within a family, enabling timely support and intervention.

Our approach is underpinned by statutory guidance, including:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2025), which highlights that absence from education can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues, including abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2023), which emphasises the importance of early help and multi-agency collaboration to protect children and support families.
- *Working Together to Improve Setting Attendance*, which reinforces the role of early years providers in promoting consistent attendance as a safeguarding priority.
- The *Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework*, which requires providers to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well, including being alert to patterns of absence that may indicate safeguarding concerns.

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our attendance monitoring procedures are designed not only to support children's learning but also to ensure that no child slips through the net

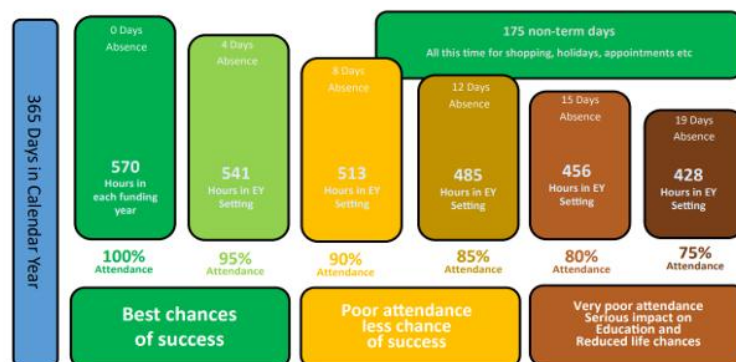
Good Early Years Attendance = Best Chances of Success

Regular attendance in the Early Years allows children to:

- Develop social skills, make friends, and learn to interact with others.
- Enhance early language, reading, and maths skills through play.
- Establish good habits for future school attendance and punctuality.
- Gain a sense of security from the routine and rhythm of the week.
- Build self-esteem and confidence through belonging.
- Improve emotional resilience and self-regulation.

Parents benefit by:

- Building relationships with early years settings to discuss impacts on learning and celebrate achievements.
- Identifying needs early and finding support for themselves or their child.
- Receiving guidance to fill gaps in their child's learning and additional needs.
- Gaining ideas to support behaviour and learning at home.



Children who miss sessions or are often late may struggle to understand what is happening and what peers are discussing.

ABSENCE

There are several reasons why a child may be absent from a setting. In most cases it is reasonable to expect that parents/carers alert the setting as soon as possible, or in the case of appointments and holidays give adequate notice. Parents/carers are advised that they should contact the setting within one hour of the time the child would have been expected to advise of their absence. Designated safeguarding leads must also adhere to Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from the provision.

- If a child who normally attends fails to arrive and no contact has been received from their parents/carers, the designated safeguarding lead, takes immediate action to contact them to seek an explanation for the absence and be assured that the child is safe and well.

- Attempts to contact the child's parents/carers or other named carers continue throughout the day on the first day of absence.
- If no contact is made with the parents/carers and there is no means to verify the reason for the child's absence i.e. through a named contact on the child's registration form, this is recorded as an unexplained absence on the child's personal file and is followed up by the manager each day until contact is made.
- If contact has not been made within three working days, children's services will be contacted for advice about making a referral. Other relevant services may be contacted as per LSP procedures.
- All absences are recorded on the child's personal file with the reason given for the absence, the expected duration and any follow up action taken or required with timescales.
- Absence records are retained for at least three years, or until the next Ofsted inspection following a cohort of children moving on to school.

If at any time further information becomes known that gives cause for concern, procedure 06.1 Responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns is immediately followed.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- The designated safeguarding lead or key person attempts to contact the parents/carers to establish why the child is absent. If contact is made and a valid reason given, the information is recorded in the child's file.
- Any relevant professionals involved with the child are informed, e.g. social worker/family support worker.
- If contact is made and the designated safeguarding lead is concerned that the child is at risk, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately. The events, conversation and follow-up actions are recorded. If contact cannot be made, the designated person contacts the relevant professionals and informs them of the situation.
- If the child has current involvement with social care, the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
- If at any time information becomes known that gives cause for concern, 06 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults procedures are followed immediately.

Safeguarding

- If a child misses three consecutive sessions and it has not been possible to make contact, the designated person calls Social Care and makes a referral if advised.
- If there is any cause for concern i.e. the child has a child protection plan in place or there have been previous safeguarding and welfare concerns, the designated person attempts to contact the child's parent/carer immediately. If no contact is made, the child's absence is logged on 06.1b Safeguarding incident reporting form, and Social Care are contacted immediately, and safeguarding procedures are followed.

Poor/irregular attendance

Whilst attendance at an early years setting is not mandatory, regular poor attendance may be indicative of safeguarding and welfare concerns that should be followed up.

- In the first instance the setting manager should discuss a child's attendance with their parents/carers to ascertain any potential barriers i.e. transport, working patterns etc and should work with the parents/carers to offer support where possible.
- If poor attendance continues and strategies to support are not having an impact, the setting manager must review the situation and decide if a referral to a multi-agency team is appropriate.
- Where there are already safeguarding and welfare concerns about a child or a child protection plan is in place, poor/irregular attendance at the setting is reported to the Social Care worker without delay.

In the case of funded children, the local authority may use their discretion, where absence is recurring or for extended periods, considering the reason for the absence and impact on the setting. The setting manager is aware of the local authority policy on reclaiming refunds when a child is absent from a setting.

It is expected that children will where possible attend all funded hours. If your child is absent for a period of 2 weeks or more, they are at risk of losing their funded place at Busy Bee Preschool. We have a duty to inform the Local Authority of prolonged periods of absence and will not be able to claim funding without satisfactory reason for their absence.

Holidays in term time.

We understand that families may want to take their children out of preschool for holidays. However, please try to plan vacations during school breaks to avoid disrupting your child's learning. If you need to take your child out during term time, inform us of the absence dates. Note that fees may still apply for non-funded hours without a 4-week notice.

Arrival times and departures

Arrivals and departures are important times when children require support from their caregiver to ensure a smooth transition. The arrival and departure policy (09.06) outlines the specific details for these times. Punctual arrival helps children adjust to the daily routine and ensures they do not miss key learning opportunities, while also maintaining the welfare and safety of all attending children.

- **Arrival time:** morning session 8.45 am - Afternoon session 12.00pm
- **Departure time:** morning session – 11.45. Afternoon session 2.45 for children attending all day / 3.00pm for children attending afternoon session only.

See uncollected child policy for children not collected on time.

policy reviewed by Tina Yeates 21/03/2025

date of next review March 2026