



## **WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY INCLUDING CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION**

### **Rationale:**

At Fairfield Nursery School we recognise that attending nursery regularly has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for children. We will encourage good attendance for all pupils, by offering an environment in which pupils feel valued and part of the nursery community.

At Fairfield Nursery School, all children are expected to attend for five mornings or five afternoons per week or flexibly within the fifteen hours, as arranged with the headteacher. Children who are eligible for 30 hours through the Extended Entitlement are expected to attend for the hours as agreed in the parental agreement. Where children attend sessions flexibly, parents must note that their child will miss special events planned on days when their child does not attend. The nursery school is under no obligation to re-allocate nor exchange these additional times for children to attend. Poor attendance can raise safeguarding concerns. Children on the Child Protection register and children in need will always be contacted on the first day of absence.

DFE guidance states that all schools should have effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance which should be set out in an attendance policy. These systems should be reviewed regularly and modified where necessary to reflect the circumstances of the school.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at nursery school is your responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason has a fundamental effect on a child's learning and education, in particular a child will struggle to catch up, to establish peer relationships and impact on a child's confidence. In circumstances where other agencies are involved with the child, the headteacher (Designated Senior Person) will try to make contact with other agencies to ensure the safety of the child.

### **Aims**

We will

- Promote a culture across the nursery school that identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school; including children, parents, staff and governors.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Set targets to improve individual and whole school attendance levels.

### **Rights, Roles and Responsibilities**

We will develop a procedural framework that defines agreed roles and responsibilities for

- **Parents and carers**
- **School staff**
- **Governors**

to complement this policy, and identify how we will deliver our aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance.

This procedural framework will include guidance on

- Registration
- Punctuality
- What constitutes unauthorised absence
- Holidays in term time/extended leave
- Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality for individual pupils
- Systems for dealing with absence
- Criteria and systems for referral to and working with the Early Intervention Team Centre family support services
- Systems for monitoring whole school attendance and action planning

### **Understanding types of Absence**

Any absence from school 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 mornings or afternoons sessions away from school 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 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 • Holidays that exceed the amount agreed by the Headteacher Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to school to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

## **Arrival**

Parents are expected to bring their child to nursery on time i.e. within the first fifteen minutes of the session to ensure the safety of all the children and avoid disruption to teaching and learning. Expectations are set at the beginning of the session and therefore it is essential that children arrive on time. Children who arrive late will need to be signed into the Late Register. The start of the children's session should not be disrupted. Parents may be asked to wait until the first key group has finished. Where children are persistently late, the headteacher will follow this up with a meeting with the parents or guardians to ascertain if there are any issues that need to be addressed and to highlight the impact on the child's education. **Being 10 minutes late everyday throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.**

## **Collection**

Parents are expected to collect their child on time. Doors are opened at 11.35am and 3.30PM. Persistent late collection will result in a charge. When children are to be collected earlier, nursery school must be informed prior to the collection.

## **Holidays in Term Time/Extended Leave**

Fairfield Nursery School will discourage the taking of holidays in term time. Fairfield Nursery School will only consider requests for leave in term time where prior permission is sought and the parent is able to demonstrate exceptional circumstances. The maximum leave that will be granted in such instances will be determined by the Headteacher on a case-by-case basis, taking into account advice from the School Attendance Consultant and the Chair of Governors.

## **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').

## **Partnership Working**

Fairfield Nursery School will work with wider professional partners and other support agencies as appropriate to ensure regular attendance at nursery school. The criteria for referral and areas of responsibility for staff will be set out in the procedural framework on attendance.

## **Monitoring, Analysis, Action Planning**

Fairfield Nursery School will use electronic systems for monitoring attendance at both individual pupil and whole school level, and will analyse patterns and trends of non-attendance to inform future action planning and target setting in respect of whole school attendance matters. Each term, parents receive a letter sharing their child's attendance percentage for that term.

## **Persistent Absence**

The minimum attendance level that is expected of all primary aged children nationally is 95%. The nursery school will seek to achieve this level of attendance in order to promote future attendance patterns. It is when attendance falls below this level that school will consider whether it is appropriate to offer support in order to improve the situation. Both local and central government pay particular attention to reducing the number of children who fall into the persistent absence category (PA). A child becomes a persistent absentee when their attendance falls below 80% at any point during the school year: whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised. When attendance nears this level, children miss significant amount of schooling; meaning that their educational progress is put at risk. We need parents' full support in ensuring that attendance does not reach this level. However, if for any reason a child's attendance does fall into this category parents will be asked to do all they can improve the situation. The child's key worker and another member of staff will make unannounced visits when a child's attendance falls below 80%. Parents will be provided with details of their child's attendance.

## **Children Missing in Education**

Although the nursery school is not statutory education, the school does follow the DFE guidance on Children Missing in Education. If a child suddenly does not return to nursery then this is followed up. If the school is not able to make contact, a home visit is made. If there is still no contact made, the police are asked to make a welfare check. If there are serious safeguarding concerns, contact is made with Children's Social Care. Children are only removed from the school register when they provide a letter stating that they are no longer attending nursery. Lancashire Local Authority is informed if the school is not able to make contact with the family and appropriate wider services are also contacted.

## **Review of Whole School Attendance Policy**

Fairfield Nursery School will review this policy and the associated procedural framework annually.

**Last review date:** October 2023.

**Next review date:** Sept 2025 (or sooner if necessary).

## **PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK FOR NURSERY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

### **Rights, Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Parents and Carers:**

- Nursery children are dependent on their carers to ensure they arrive for the start of the nursery session. Carers should ensure they bring their child punctually for every session.
- Parents and carers should always inform the nursery if their child is unwell and not fit to attend.
- If the child has COVID symptoms, they will be asked to follow the government guidelines
- If the family is encountering difficulties that affect their ability to get their child to nursery each day, they should discuss this with their nursery school key worker or head teacher.

#### **Staff:**

- Key workers will discuss attendance and punctuality with children, parents and carers.
- Nursery administrators will contact families on the first day of absence if parents/carers have failed to notify the school.

- Nursery teachers will take a daily register, which will be closed 15 minutes after the start of the session.
- Nursery school attendance will be monitored through the SIMS attendance program.
- The school administrator will inform the head teacher should a child's attendance fall below 80%.
- The child's key worker and another member of staff will carry out an unannounced home visit to discuss attendance.
- If contact is not made with the family then police will be contacted to carry out a welfare check, key workers will inform the family that this will take place
- The head teacher will report on attendance to governors each term through the head teacher report.
- Information on attendance will be shared with parents each term

**Governors:**

- Governors will determine levels of attendance permissible prior to removing and reallocating nursery school places.