

Attendance Policy

At The Orchard Day Nursery Kingston, we believe that regular attendance is essential for children's learning, emotional wellbeing, development and security. Establishing consistent attendance routines helps children build positive relationships, develop confidence, engage in the curriculum and benefit from continuity of care.

We recognise that there are many reasons why attendance may become irregular, including illness, family circumstances, additional needs, transport difficulties or wider safeguarding concerns. We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to understand and address any barriers to attendance, offering support wherever possible.

During the registration process, parents will be informed of the nursery's attendance expectations and the importance of notifying the nursery as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend. We encourage open communication with families and will always seek to work collaboratively to promote children's wellbeing and regular attendance.

Where families require additional support, we will discuss appropriate strategies and, with parental consent where appropriate, may signpost or refer families to relevant services such as Health Visiting, Early Help, SEND support services or other professionals.

Recording Attendance

Accurate attendance records are an essential part of our safeguarding responsibilities. Attendance registers are completed promptly at the beginning of every session and record each child's arrival and departure times. Any absence is recorded together with the reason provided by parents or carers.

The Nursery Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) regularly review attendance records to identify emerging patterns, repeated absences, frequent late arrivals, sudden changes in attendance or any other concerns that may indicate a child or family requires additional support.

Attendance information forms part of the nursery's wider safeguarding monitoring and contributes to our understanding of each child's wellbeing.

Responding to Unexplained Absence

If a child does not attend nursery as expected and the nursery has not been informed of the reason for their absence, staff will begin follow-up procedures as soon as reasonably possible after the start of the session.

The child's parent or primary carer will be contacted using all available telephone numbers. If contact cannot be established, additional authorised contacts listed on the child's registration form will also be contacted.

Every attempt to contact the family will be accurately recorded, including the time, method of contact and outcome.

Where appropriate, and following discussion with the Nursery Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead, a home visit may be considered if this is deemed proportionate and safe. Staff will remain professionally curious throughout the process and will not make assumptions regarding the child's welfare simply because previous absences have been explained.

Attendance as a Safeguarding Responsibility

Although attendance at an early years setting is not compulsory, we recognise that an unexplained absence may be an early indicator that a child or family requires additional support or may be experiencing safeguarding concerns.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider every unexplained absence alongside all other information known about the child and family. This includes previous attendance patterns, existing safeguarding concerns, involvement with Children's Social Care, Child Protection Plans, Child in Need Plans, Early Help involvement, domestic abuse, parental mental health, substance misuse, housing instability, neglect or any other known vulnerabilities.

Where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm, the nursery will not wait for repeated absences before taking action.

Immediate Safeguarding Action

Where a child's whereabouts cannot be established and there are safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will undertake an immediate risk assessment.

Depending on the level of concern, this may include contacting the child's allocated Social Worker, Health Visitor or other professionals already involved with the family.

If the child is not known to statutory services but there are concerns regarding their safety or welfare, an immediate referral will be made to the local authority Single Point of Access (SPA) or Children's Social Care in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

Where there is reason to believe that a child is at immediate risk of significant harm or where staff believe a child may have been unlawfully removed or abandoned, the police will be contacted without delay to request a welfare check.

The nursery will not delay making safeguarding referrals whilst continuing attempts to contact parents if professional judgement indicates that the child may be at risk.

Children with Additional Safeguarding Vulnerabilities

Some children require enhanced monitoring because they are known to be particularly vulnerable.

This includes children who are subject to Child Protection Plans, Child in Need Plans, Looked After Children, previously looked after children, children with SEND, those receiving Early Help, or children where there are existing safeguarding concerns.

For these children, any unexpected absence will be treated as a priority. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow any agreed multi-agency procedures and immediately notify the child's Social Worker or lead professional where appropriate.

Persistent or Irregular Attendance

Where attendance becomes inconsistent, the Nursery Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead will arrange to speak with parents to understand the reasons for the pattern of attendance and discuss any support that may be helpful.

The nursery recognises that persistent absence is often a symptom of wider difficulties rather than the problem itself. Staff will work respectfully with families to identify barriers and, where appropriate, offer Early Help or make referrals to other support services.

If attendance concerns continue and there are indications that a child's welfare may be affected, safeguarding procedures will be followed without delay.

Recording and Monitoring

All attendance concerns, telephone calls, discussions with parents, professional consultations, referrals and decisions will be fully documented and stored securely in accordance with the nursery's Record Keeping and Data Protection policies.

The Nursery Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead will regularly analyse attendance information to identify trends, review the effectiveness of support provided and ensure safeguarding procedures have been implemented appropriately.

Attendance records contribute to the nursery's wider safeguarding monitoring and are reviewed as part of quality assurance and safeguarding audits.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>6th August 2026</i>	F.Joyce	<i>December 2026</i>