

Attendance Policy Early Childhood Department

September 2013 by Kirstie Swanborough

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Arriving

All classes require children to arrive punctually in the mornings, so that activities and play can begin harmoniously. If a child arrives after 8.40am a 'late' mark will be put in the register (Punctuality will be monitored for and regular lateness will be followed up as necessary-please see below.)

Illness

If a child is ill parents/carers must ring the main school office by 9.00am so that the register can be completed correctly. We monitor for irregular attendance. When a child is absent from school for more than 3 days a letter of explanation is required from parents/carers.

Attendance

It is imperative that all Early Years pupils attend the days allocated by their teacher. Coming regularly supports the child's physical, social and emotional development. Parental support is vital because Rhythm and Repetition are two of the foundations of the Steiner/ Waldorf curriculum. **see below for more information.*

In the final year of Kindergarten children are expected to attend for 5 mornings. This is required for the children to develop stamina in preparation for class 1. There are also legal regulations stipulating that a child of statutory school age has to attend school full time. This is from the beginning of the term after they turn 5 years old.

If a child is regularly missing sessions or is often late, we will ask to have a parent conversation and may need to follow this up with a more formal approach-letters to parent/carers about our concerns.

Early childhood teachers will liaise with colleagues in the main school as necessary, if we think the on-going situation for the child could possibly affect the child establishing themselves in the main school.

If there are any concerns regarding regular non-attendance after all the above steps have been explored, the Early Years teacher will consult with the school's nominated DSL (designated safeguarding lead) or one of the DSPs (designated safeguarding persons).

Holidays in Term time

The school does not encourage children to be taken out of school during term time. It is considered that the holidays are long enough to allow for holiday times. Holidays in term time can only be agreed for exceptional circumstances. Reasonable notice of these kind of absences must be given to the child's teacher. There are specific 'Holiday Request' forms available from the office for this purpose. These must be filled in after discussion with the teacher and *before time is taken out of the school term*. Holidays during term time are usually marked as unauthorised absences in the register.

Additional notes

The children who regularly attend whilst in our early childhood department benefit fully from the curriculum, making secure relationships which will help them in their development throughout their entire school journey. Teachers have observed that if a child does not attend regularly they are out of their own rhythm with the group, making it harder for them to feel settled and comfortable when they do come back. This in turn can unsettle the group as a whole. Also a child can miss valuable experiences such as festivals and their preparation, birthdays, puppet shows, plays and walk days. These are all part of the bigger yearly picture and seasonal round which tie the children into their life and relationships.

Further information, advice and guidance

- ECD alternative collection arrangements
- Procedures for bringing children to Kindergarten
- SDSS attendance and lateness policy

Compliance

- Independent school standards, December 2014
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/pdfs/ukxi_20143283_en.pdf
- School attendance: guidance for schools (published by DfE November 2016)
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564599/school_attendance.pdf

References:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- ECD - Policy on school hours for children of statutory school age