



Managing Child Absence Policy and Procedure

June 2018

To be reviewed June 2021

Managing Child Absence: Policy and Procedure

1. Principles

1. The early years are critical in children's development. Children develop rapidly during this time – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. It is the school's responsibility to ensure we provide the very best for children by
 - Providing challenging and exciting learning experiences,
 - Providing well qualified, caring and supportive staff, who understand how young children learn,
 - Promoting partnership working with our families to enable children to make the best progress.
2. Children who attend Abercromby Nursery School are of non-statutory school age. However, when a place is accepted, the school requires a commitment to good attendance and punctuality, so that children get the most from their time with us.
3. It is the children's families' responsibility to ensure that they help their children understand how important education is, by bringing their children to school on time and on a daily basis, forming good habits early.
4. Recent tragic cases, such as that the death of Chadrack Mulo in London, in 2016, a young non-verbal child with Autism, who died when left alone for two weeks after his mother had passed away because of an epileptic fit, have heightened the very important role that schools play, when children become absent without a reasonable explanation.

2. Working with Families

1. Regular Coffee Mornings and Stay Play and Learn sessions are held at least half termly in school to foster excellent home/school relationships, helping families understand the importance of quality Nursery School education.
2. The Head Teacher will speak to all new families, highlighting the importance of regular punctual attendance and the possibility of children losing their place should attendance and punctuality be poor without good reason.
3. Key Persons will raise the importance of attendance and punctuality when they visit families on their home visit.
4. It is to be expected that as children begin nursery, they will become exposed to more germs and are likely to pick up common childhood illnesses, until their immunity builds up. Parents will be supported with advice as to whether their child needs to be off, and for how long e.g. 48 hours after an episode of diarrhoea and vomiting.
5. Families should bring their children into school between 8.45-9.00 am and pick them up between 2.45 pm and 3.00 pm (by 11.30 am on Wednesdays for those children with a Start/Week place). Lateness will also be monitored in the school absence book.
6. Clear communication channels are promoted:
 - Families should inform the school in the morning before 9.30 am as to why their child is not coming to school.

- If families have failed to inform the school, the school office will contact the home and establish why the child is absent.
 - If the school is unable to make contact with the home, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the school will set in motion its procedures for unexplained absences – see Section 3.
 - If children are going to be late in, or families will be late picking their children up at the end of the day, a phone call must be made to the office. If families are habitually late picking their children up, the school reserves the right to charge families for the extra time they have to look after the children, at £5 per lateness.
 - If children are not collected by 3.30 pm and there is no response from any of the emergency contact numbers, school will contact Social Services.
7. Attendance is monitored daily through registers. The Head Teacher and Admin Staff monitor attendance and punctuality on a daily basis and meet half termly to monitor and review attendance and punctuality. Children who have attendance below 85% and/or who are regularly late will be flagged up at these meetings. Initially the Key Person will meet with families to establish reasons and support the family in improving attendance and punctuality. Following this meeting the child's absences and/or punctuality will be monitored closely.
 8. Families are informed of Liverpool Council's policy regarding holidays in school time, and the time away being classed as an unauthorised absence. However we are aware of the needs of our families, many of whom are based overseas. Any requests for time off during school time should be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least 10 days before the date of travel, with all the details of when and for how long the child will be off. If the child is likely to be away from the Nursery for a month or more, we cannot guarantee to hold the place open.
 9. If, after every attempt has been made to support the family and absenteeism and/or lateness persist, there will be a meeting with the Head Teacher. Unless attendance and/or punctuality improve, the child could lose their school place.
 10. Children, who have 100% attendance per half term will have their names printed in the school newsletter.
 11. Parents will be made aware of this policy when their child starts, their role in supporting good attendance and punctuality and the procedures staff will follow in case of a child's absence. This one page summary will be given to all families as they start a new academic year, both returners and new children.

3. Procedures for managing a child's absence

1. It is important that Abercromby Nursery School has robust procedures in place for managing absences, including how to deal with an unexplained absence and that there is a clear timeline for how and when staff will escalate matters.
2. Room staff will inform the office of any children who have not arrived, by 9.30 am. This may be done using the online register.
3. Any absence will be recorded in the school absence book. This will also be used to record lateness.

4. If a child is absent without explanation, on the first day of absence, Admin Staff will telephone the family using the contact numbers given on admission. At least three different emergency contacts are requested; for some families here temporarily for studies, contact details from their home country may be needed to meet the requirement for three emergency contacts. Messages will be left if there is no answer.
5. It is important that staff persevere until there is an adequate answer for the absence, and if on the second day of absence, after further attempts to contact the family via telephone, there is still no explanation for the child's absence, a Home Visit will be made by two members of staff, including a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
6. If after a Home Visit, there is still no reasonable explanation for a child's absence, appropriate steps will be taken e.g. contacting Careline or the Police.
7. There needs to be recognition of the increased vulnerability of certain groups of children, e.g. disabled children, children who are on the Child Protection register etc.

APPENDIX

This simplified copy of our policy and procedures on the following page will be given to parents in their Starter Pack and to all returning children; it will be referred to as necessary throughout their time with us:



YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

1. Our families and the staff team at Abercromby want all our children to thrive and learn, getting the most from their time with us. It is extremely important that children have good attendance, arrive at school on time, and are picked up at the right time. Please work with us to promote good attendance and punctuality and help build good habits for life.
2. Daily attendance is expected. Taking your child out, even for a day – to visit a relative, go shopping etc. – is not seen by the Authority as an acceptable absence and is recorded as unauthorised.
3. If your child is really ill he/she needs to get better at home. You must inform the office if your child is absent, by telephoning the school office on 0151 709 5114 by 9.30 am, explaining the reason for the absence. Keeping accurate daily registers is a legal requirement and so we need to ensure that clear reasons for absences are recorded.
4. If your child is absent and you do not ring us then we will ring you; if we can't get hold of you we will try the other emergency contacts you have given us. If on the second day of an absence, we still have not had an adequate explanation, then a Home Visit may be carried out for safeguarding reasons.
5. If one of your other children is ill, you must try and ensure that your child attends the nursery. Keeping your child at home should only happen in exceptional circumstances.
6. Please bring and collect your child on time, as this is as important as regular daily attendance. Drop off time is 8.45-9.00 am and we expect all children to be in for 9.00 am ready for a fabulous day of learning. Pick up time is between 2.45-3.00 pm. Please do not arrive earlier than this as your child will miss an important part of their education.
7. Wednesday is changeover day for many children. If your child has a Start/Week place, please collect them between 11.15-11.30 am. If your child has an End/Week place, please arrive at 11.45 am ready for lunch.
8. Late arrival or collection can make your child upset. If you are unavoidably held up and will be late collecting your child you must phone the school. If a child is left at the school for more than thirty minutes after their normal pick up time, with no reason given, we are required to contact Social Services. If a child is regularly collected late without a good reason, Abercromby Nursery School may charge for the extra childcare, at £5 per late incident.
9. Please avoid booking holidays in term time and organise family holidays during school holidays. Liverpool Council advises that holidays and extended leave should not be authorised in term time. If you wish to apply for leave you must complete a form available from the school at least 10 days prior to the proposed date of travel with all the details of your travel. If your child is likely to be away from the Nursery for a month or more, we cannot guarantee to hold their place open.
10. If your child is regularly late or has frequent absences you will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher to talk about the reason for the absences or lateness. We will always support our families with genuine reasons.
11. In extreme cases where absences are lengthy or numerous even after we have done our best to work with families, the child will lose their place at our school and it will be offered to another child on our waiting list.