Stowey Bears Preschool Attendance Policy (Updated for 2024–2026 Legislation)

"Good attendance is essential for children's learning, wellbeing and long-term outcomes." (Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE)

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out Stowey Bears Preschool's approach to attendance, punctuality and absence management. It ensures compliance with:

- **Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2022–2024)**
- **EYFS Statutory Framework (2024)** – Section 3: Safeguarding & Welfare
- **Children Missing Education Guidance (2023)**
- **KCSIE (2024)** – duties relating to safeguarding and children with social workers
- **Education Act 1996, 2002, 2006**
- **Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 (as amended)**
- **Equality Act 2010**

The policy aims to:

- promote good attendance and punctuality;
- reduce unnecessary absences;
- identify and address persistent absence early;
- ensure safeguarding procedures are followed for unexplained absence;
- build strong partnerships with parents and carers;
- ensure every child accesses high-quality early education.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Committee & Manager

- Ensure statutory attendance duties are met.
- Maintain oversight of attendance data and trends.
- Ensure staff receive relevant attendance and safeguarding training.
- Ensure compliance with updated DfE guidance.
- Challenge and support staff where attendance concerns arise.

Manager

The Manager will:

- implement this policy and ensure consistent practice;
- monitor attendance daily, weekly and termly;
- ensure attendance systems meet EYFS safeguarding requirements;
- ensure children with a **social worker** or identified vulnerabilities receive enhanced monitoring;
- liaise with external agencies where attendance concerns may indicate safeguarding risk;
- meet with parents to address barriers to attendance;
- ensure accurate record-keeping and reporting.

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Practitioners

Room Leads and practitioners will:

- complete attendance registers every morning and afternoon;
- notify the Manager immediately when a child is absent or patterns emerge;
- follow safeguarding procedures for unexplained absence;
- support children's punctual arrival routines.

Manager & Room Leads (Rachel, Sarah, Lindsey)

- answer and record attendance-related calls and messages;
- ensure safeguarding concerns linked to absence are logged and escalated via the preschool's safeguarding systems;
- complete first-day calling and follow-up actions.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers must:

- ensure their child attends preschool regularly;
- report absence promptly using agreed systems;
- request leave only in exceptional circumstances;
- work with the preschool to address barriers to attendance.

3. Protocols and Procedures

Recording Attendance

In line with statutory requirements, Stowey Bears will:

- maintain accurate daily registers;
- record off-site activities;
- record exceptional circumstances affecting attendance;
- store attendance records securely in line with GDPR.

Amending the Register

Any amendment must include:

- original entry;
- reason for amendment;
- date of amendment;
- name and role of the person making the amendment.

Monitoring Attendance

We monitor attendance:

- daily
- weekly
- termly

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- annually

Attendance data is used to:

- identify patterns or concerns;
- support early intervention;
- inform discussions with families;
- evaluate the impact of attendance strategies.

Reporting to Parents

Parents will be informed of:

- their child's attendance patterns;
- concerns relating to persistent absence;
- the impact of poor attendance on learning and wellbeing.

4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised Absence

Examples include:

- illness;
- emergency medical/dental appointments;
- religious observance;
- bereavement;
- part-time timetables agreed as part of SEND or medical plans;
- absence due to safeguarding or social care involvement;
- traveller occupational reasons.

Evidence may be requested where appropriate, but not excessively.

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will be unauthorised when:

- no reason is provided;
- the reason cannot be established;
- absence is for non-essential appointments or holidays.

Non-Emergency Appointments

Parents are asked to book non-urgent appointments outside preschool hours.

5. Punctuality

- Morning register opens during circle time.
- Children sign in using their tree pegs.
- Preschool day ends at **3:20pm**.
- Persistent lateness will be discussed with parents.

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6. Reporting Absence

Parents may report absence:

- face-to-face;
- via Tapestry;
- email;
- phone call.

All absence must be reported on the first day.

7. Persistent and Severe Absence

- **Persistent absence:** missing **10%** or more of sessions.
- **Severe absence:** missing **50%** or more.

Actions may include:

- meetings with parents;
- early help referrals;
- enhanced monitoring;
- multi-agency involvement;
- attendance support plans.

8. Handling Unexplained Absence (Safeguarding)

In line with **KCSIE (2024)** and **Children Missing Education (2023)**:

If a child is absent without explanation, Stowey Bears will:

1. **First-day phone call**
2. **Tapestry message and email**
3. **Second-day follow-up call**
4. **Home visit** if concerns persist
5. **Contact sibling's school** (if known)
6. **Escalate to Social Care** if child is vulnerable or concerns escalate

Children with a **social worker** receive immediate first-day escalation.

9. Monitoring and Review

- Policy reviewed **annually** or sooner if legislation changes.
- Reviewed by Manager and approved by Head of Committee.
- Last updated: **July 2026**
- Next review: **July 2027** (or earlier if DfE guidance updates).

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