

Oyster Bay Nursery

Attendance Policy

Date written: October 2026

Date of last update: October 2026

Date agreed and ratified by October 2026

Date of next full review: September 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any lessons learnt and/or updates to national or local guidance and procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Debra Hines
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Grace Sidders Rachel Finch
Nominated Individual	Debra Hines
Nursery Manager	Grace Sidders

1. Policy Statement

Oyster Bay Nursery recognises that regular attendance and punctuality help children settle into nursery life, build positive relationships, participate in learning experiences and benefit from the opportunities available to them.

Although nursery education is non-statutory, regular attendance is important for children's learning, development, wellbeing and sense of belonging. We are committed to promoting good attendance and punctuality and working in partnership with parents and carers to address any difficulties that may lead to absence.

We understand that children may be absent for a variety of reasons, including illness, medical appointments and family circumstances. All absences will be treated sensitively, while ensuring children's welfare and safety remain a priority.

2. Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Promote regular attendance and punctuality.
- Support children to settle, develop friendships and participate fully in nursery activities.
- Ensure attendance and absences are recorded accurately.
- Ensure parents and carers understand their responsibilities for notifying the nursery of absences.
- Identify patterns of absence or lateness and address concerns promptly.
- Work with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Follow relevant local authority and funding requirements for children accessing funded early education.

3. Why Attendance and Punctuality Matter

Regular attendance and punctuality are important because:

- Absence may affect a child's ability to participate in and benefit from learning experiences.
- Late arrival can disrupt room routines and activities for the child and other children.
- Frequent absence may make it harder for a child to settle, become involved in activities and build relationships.

- Consistent attendance helps children become familiar with nursery routines and develop confidence and independence.
- Arriving on time helps children join activities calmly and feel included from the start of the session.

4. Promoting Good Attendance

Oyster Bay Nursery will promote the importance of attendance and punctuality through:

- Discussions with parents and carers during initial visits, registration and settling-in sessions.
- Conversations between parents and their child's key person.
- Parent meetings, consultations and informal discussions.
- Clear information about session times, registration and absence reporting procedures.
- Early support and discussion where attendance or punctuality concerns arise.

Staff will aim to work positively with families and identify practical ways to support regular attendance.

5. Recording Attendance and Absence

Nursery staff will maintain an accurate daily register using the nursery's designated recording system, currently Ovivio, and the appropriate attendance and absence codes.

Staff will:

- Record children's attendance and absences consistently.
- Record arrival and collection times in accordance with nursery procedures.
- Note reasons for absence when provided by parents or carers.
- Follow up unexplained absences where appropriate.
- Raise concerns about repeated or unexplained absence with the Nursery Manager.
- Maintain attendance records securely and in line with the nursery's data protection procedures.

6. Reporting Absence

Parents and carers must notify Oyster Bay Nursery on the first day of their child's absence, preferably before the child's normal arrival time.

Notification should be made by telephone or through the nursery's agreed communication method. Parents and carers should explain the reason for the absence and, where possible, provide an expected return date.

If a child is absent and the nursery has not received an explanation, a staff member may contact the parent or carer to establish the reason for the absence and check on the child's welfare.

If the nursery cannot contact the family, or if the circumstances raise concerns about the child's safety or welfare, the Nursery Manager will consider appropriate follow-up action in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

7. Illness and Other Absences

Parents and carers should inform the nursery if their child is unwell or unable to attend.

Children who are ill should remain at home when necessary to support their recovery and reduce the risk of infection spreading to others. The nursery's illness and infection-control procedures will apply, including any required exclusion periods.

Parents and carers should also notify the nursery of other reasons for absence, such as medical appointments, family circumstances or unexpected events.

Absences will be considered on an individual basis. The nursery will not discourage parents from keeping an unwell child at home.

8. Planned Holidays and Other Planned Absences

Parents and carers should inform the nursery in advance of planned holidays or other periods when their child will not attend.

Where possible, holidays should be arranged outside the child's usual nursery sessions, particularly where the child accesses a funded place and attendance conditions apply.

The nursery will explain any relevant funding or attendance requirements to parents and carers. Any implications for a funded place will be handled in accordance with the applicable local authority arrangements and the child's funding agreement.

9. Punctuality

Parents and carers are expected to bring their child at the agreed session start time and collect them at the agreed end time.

Arriving on time helps children settle into the room routine and participate in planned activities. Where a family expects to be late, they should notify the nursery as soon as possible.

If a child is persistently late, staff will discuss the situation with the parents or carers to understand any difficulties and agree reasonable steps to improve punctuality.

The nursery will handle late arrivals sensitively and ensure children are welcomed safely into the setting.

10. Persistent or Unexplained Absence

Where a child has repeated absences, unexplained absences or a pattern of poor attendance, the Nursery Manager will:

1. Review the child's attendance record.
2. Contact the parents or carers to establish the reasons for the absences.
3. Discuss any barriers to attendance and identify support that may help.
4. Arrange a meeting with the family if concerns continue.
5. Agree any appropriate actions and review progress.
6. Seek advice from or notify the relevant local authority where required, particularly in relation to funded early education or safeguarding concerns.

The nursery will aim to resolve attendance difficulties through partnership with families. However, unexplained or concerning absence may require further action under the nursery's safeguarding procedures.

11. Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are asked to work in partnership with Oyster Bay Nursery by:

- Informing the nursery on the first day their child is absent.
- Giving advance notice of planned holidays and other planned absences.
- Ensuring their child arrives and is collected at the agreed times.
- Providing accurate contact details and updating the nursery when these change.
- Responding to reasonable enquiries about unexplained absences.
- Informing the nursery of circumstances that may affect attendance.
- Working with staff to resolve difficulties that may lead to persistent absence or lateness.
- Where practicable, arranging routine medical and dental appointments outside nursery sessions, while ensuring necessary healthcare is not delayed.

12. Responsibilities of Staff and the Nursery Manager

All staff are responsible for recording attendance accurately and reporting concerns to the Nursery Manager.

The Nursery Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring attendance records are completed and maintained appropriately.
- Monitoring patterns of absence and lateness.
- Ensuring unexplained absences are followed up.
- Communicating attendance concerns to parents and carers.
- Working with families to identify support and practical solutions.
- Liaising with the local authority where required by funding arrangements or safeguarding procedures.
- Ensuring attendance information is handled confidentially.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of this policy.

13. Funded Early Education

For children accessing funded early education, Oyster Bay Nursery will follow the relevant local authority's funding terms, conditions and attendance requirements.

Parents and carers will be informed of any attendance expectations that apply to their child's funded place. Where continuous or repeated absence may affect funding arrangements, the nursery will discuss the situation with the family and contact the local authority where required.

Any decisions relating to a funded place will be made in accordance with the applicable requirements and the child's individual circumstances.

14. Safeguarding and Child Welfare

Attendance monitoring is one way the nursery helps safeguard children.

If a child is unexpectedly absent, particularly where the absence is unexplained or unusual, staff will make appropriate enquiries. Where the nursery has concerns about a child's welfare, staff will follow the nursery's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and seek advice or make referrals to the appropriate agencies when necessary.

Attendance concerns will not be treated solely as a punctuality issue where there may be an underlying safeguarding concern.

15. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Attendance records and information about reasons for absence will be handled confidentially and stored securely.

Information will only be shared with authorised individuals or relevant agencies where there is a lawful basis to do so, including where sharing is necessary to safeguard a child or meet applicable funding or regulatory requirements.

16. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local authority funding arrangements or nursery procedures.

Oyster Bay Nursery is committed to working in partnership with families to encourage regular attendance, support punctuality and ensure every child has the opportunity to benefit from nursery life.