



Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

Policy 10.13–Attendance

Impact Montessori Nursery

1. Policy statement

Impact Montessori Nursery recognises that regular attendance supports children's learning, development, wellbeing, relationships and safeguarding.

We work in partnership with parents and carers to promote regular and punctual attendance and to ensure that any absence is appropriately explained and followed up.

As an early years provider, we recognise that unexplained or prolonged absence may sometimes indicate that a child or family requires additional support or that there may be a safeguarding concern. We therefore monitor attendance and follow up unexplained and prolonged absences promptly and proportionately.

Our attendance arrangements are designed to support children and families rather than to penalise families when a child is genuinely unable to attend.

This policy applies to all children attending Impact Montessori Nursery, including children attending funded and privately paid places.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- promote regular attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that children are welcomed and supported when they attend;
- establish clear expectations for parents and carers regarding attendance and absence;
- ensure that unexplained absences are followed up promptly;
- identify patterns of absence that may indicate that additional support is required;
- identify possible safeguarding concerns at an early stage;
- work collaboratively with parents and carers to address barriers to attendance;

- maintain accurate and up-to-date attendance records; and
- comply with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) safeguarding and welfare requirements.

The EYFS requires providers to have an attendance policy shared with parents and carers and to follow up unexplained or prolonged absences promptly. Help for Early Years Providers

3. Responsibility for attendance

The Nursery Manager has overall responsibility for implementing this policy.

The Manager will:

- ensure an accurate attendance register is maintained;
- ensure staff understand the nursery's attendance procedures;
- monitor unexplained and prolonged absences;
- monitor patterns of absence and lateness;
- ensure concerns are followed up appropriately;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are referred in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- work with parents and carers to understand barriers to attendance;
- maintain appropriate records; and
- review the effectiveness of the nursery's attendance arrangements.

All staff have a responsibility to remain alert to attendance-related safeguarding concerns and to report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Nursery Manager.

4. Parent and carer responsibilities

Parents and carers are expected to:

- ensure that their child attends the nursery regularly and on the agreed days and hours;
- bring their child to nursery at the agreed start time;
- collect their child promptly at the agreed collection time;
- inform the nursery as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend;
- provide a reason for the child's absence;
- inform the nursery of any expected absence in advance where possible;
- inform the nursery if their child is going to be late;
- keep the nursery informed of changes to telephone numbers, addresses and emergency contacts; and
- provide any relevant information that may help the nursery support their child's attendance and wellbeing.

Parents should contact the nursery using:

Telephone: 07758 258515

Email: _____

5. Attendance register

Impact Montessori Nursery maintains an accurate record of children's attendance.

The attendance register will record:

- each child's name;
- the date;
- the agreed session or attendance period;
- whether the child is present or absent;
- the child's arrival time where applicable;
- the child's departure time where applicable;
- the reason for absence where known; and
- relevant follow-up actions where required.

Attendance records will be maintained securely and in accordance with the nursery's data protection and record-keeping procedures.

6. Arrival and registration

Children should arrive within their agreed attendance times.

On arrival:

- parents or authorised adults will bring the child into the nursery safely;
- staff will record the child's attendance;
- staff will be informed of any relevant information concerning the child's health, wellbeing or circumstances;
- children will be welcomed by staff and supported to settle into the session.

Where a child arrives significantly late, staff may speak with the parent or carer to establish whether there are any issues affecting the child's attendance.

Repeated lateness will be discussed with parents in a supportive manner.

7. Reporting absence

Parents and carers must notify the nursery as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend.

Where possible, parents should provide:

- the child's name;
- the reason for absence;
- the expected duration of the absence; and
- any relevant information about the child's health or wellbeing.

If the absence is due to illness, parents should provide sufficient information to enable the nursery to determine whether the child can safely return.

The nursery will follow its **Illness and Infection Control Policy** when deciding whether a child should remain at home.

8. Unexplained absence

If a child does not attend and the nursery has not received an explanation, the nursery will make reasonable attempts to contact the parent or carer promptly.

The nursery will normally:

1. check the attendance register and child's records;
2. contact the parent or carer using the contact details held by the nursery;
3. contact the child's emergency contacts where appropriate;
4. record attempts made to establish the reason for the absence;
5. consider whether there are any known safeguarding or welfare concerns; and
6. escalate the concern to the DSL where appropriate.

The nursery will not assume that an unexplained absence is simply a routine absence.

9. Prolonged absence

Where a child is absent for a prolonged period, the Nursery Manager will maintain appropriate contact with the family and seek to understand the reason for the absence.

The nursery will consider:

- the reason for the absence;
- the child's age and circumstances;
- whether the absence is expected or unexpected;
- whether the family has maintained contact;
- whether there is a pattern of absence;
- whether the child has additional needs;
- whether there are known health, family or welfare concerns; and
- whether the absence raises a safeguarding concern.

Where appropriate, the nursery may work with parents and relevant professionals to support the child's return to regular attendance.

10. Safeguarding and attendance

Impact Montessori Nursery recognises that absence can sometimes be an indicator that a child or family requires support or that a safeguarding concern may exist.

Staff will remain alert to:

- unexplained absence;
- sudden changes in attendance;
- repeated or prolonged absence;
- repeated unexplained lateness or collection issues;
- a child regularly missing sessions without explanation;
- changes in a child's presentation or behaviour following absence;
- information suggesting that the child may be experiencing neglect, abuse or other harm;
- concerns about a family's circumstances that may affect the child's safety or wellbeing; and
- attempts to withdraw or remove a child from nursery in circumstances that raise safeguarding concerns.

Attendance concerns will be considered alongside other information known about the child and family.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, staff will follow the nursery's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** and report the concern immediately to the DSL.

Where appropriate, the nursery may contact children's social care, the police or another relevant safeguarding professional.

The EYFS identifies attendance and child absence as an important safeguarding consideration and requires providers to follow up unexplained or prolonged absence and consider welfare concerns. Help for Early Years Providers

11. Attendance of children subject to a child protection plan or receiving children's social care support

Where a child is known to children's social care or is subject to a child protection or child in need plan, attendance information will be shared with relevant professionals where this is necessary and lawful.

Any significant change in attendance or unexplained absence will be reported in accordance with the child's safeguarding plan and local safeguarding arrangements.

Attendance information may be an important part of professional discussions about a child's welfare. Current government guidance recognises attendance as a relevant protective factor in child in need and child protection planning. GOV.UK

12. Children with additional needs or disabilities

We recognise that some children may experience barriers to regular attendance because of:

- disability or additional needs;
- medical conditions;
- sensory needs;
- anxiety or emotional needs;
- difficulties with transitions;
- family circumstances; or
- other individual circumstances.

The nursery will work with parents and relevant professionals to identify reasonable and practical support.

Where appropriate, we may consider:

- an individual attendance support plan;
- adjustments to arrival arrangements;
- additional settling-in support;
- a gradual return following an extended absence;
- changes to the child's routine;
- advice from relevant professionals; and
- additional communication between the nursery and family.

13. Illness and absence

Children should not attend nursery when they are unwell and their attendance would be contrary to current public health advice or the nursery's illness procedures.

Parents must inform the nursery when a child is absent because of illness.

The nursery will follow current public health guidance and its **Illness and Infection Control Policy** when determining when a child can safely return.

The nursery will not encourage parents to send a child to nursery when they are too unwell to participate safely in normal activities.

14. Holidays and planned absence

Parents should inform the nursery in advance of any planned absence.

Parents should provide:

- the dates of the proposed absence; and
- the reason for the absence.

The nursery will consider planned absences in accordance with the child's attendance arrangements, funding requirements and the nursery's contractual terms.

Where a child has a funded place, the nursery will also comply with the requirements of the relevant local authority funding agreement.

Current DfE early education and childcare guidance recognises that short-term absence, including sickness, holidays and family emergencies, may occur and sets expectations for local authorities and providers concerning funded places. GOV.UK

15. Persistent or concerning patterns of absence

Where attendance becomes irregular or a pattern of absence develops, the Nursery Manager will discuss the matter with the parents or carers.

The purpose of this discussion will be to:

- understand the reasons for the absence;
- identify any barriers to attendance;
- determine whether the family needs additional support;
- agree practical steps to improve attendance; and
- consider whether there are any safeguarding concerns.

The nursery will take a supportive and proportionate approach.

Where concerns remain, the nursery may seek advice or support from the local authority, health professionals, children's social care or other relevant agencies.

16. Children who do not return after an agreed absence

If a child does not return to nursery following an agreed period of absence and the nursery is unable to establish contact with the family, the Manager will:

- attempt to contact the parents using all available contact details;

- contact emergency contacts where appropriate;
- review the child's records for relevant information;
- consider whether there are safeguarding concerns;
- seek advice from the DSL and relevant agencies where appropriate; and
- record all actions taken.

The nursery will not remove a child from its records solely because they have been absent without following appropriate procedures.

17. Attendance and funded places

Where a child receives funded early education, Impact Montessori Nursery will comply with the relevant local authority funding agreement and applicable DfE requirements.

Parents and carers will be informed of the attendance expectations associated with their child's funded place.

The nursery will maintain accurate records of funded children's attendance and provide information to the local authority where required.

18. Collection and departure

Children must be collected by an authorised adult at the agreed collection time.

Parents must inform the nursery as soon as possible if they are delayed or if someone else will collect their child.

The nursery will follow its **Uncollected Child Policy** where a child has not been collected at the expected time.

Attendance records will be updated to reflect the child's departure.

19. Late collection

Persistent late collection may affect the child's wellbeing and the nursery's ability to maintain appropriate staffing arrangements.

Where late collection occurs:

- staff will ensure the child remains safely supervised;
- the parent or authorised collector will be contacted where necessary;
- the incident will be recorded;
- the Manager will discuss repeated late collection with the parent or carer; and
- the nursery may apply charges in accordance with its terms and conditions.

Where late collection raises safeguarding concerns, the matter will be managed in accordance with the safeguarding and uncollected child procedures.

20. Attendance monitoring

The Nursery Manager will regularly monitor attendance records to identify:

- unexplained absences;
- prolonged absence;

- repeated lateness;
- patterns of absence;
- changes in attendance;
- children requiring additional support; and
- possible safeguarding concerns.

Attendance monitoring will consider the individual circumstances of each child and family.

The nursery will not use attendance information in isolation to make assumptions about a family.

21. Information sharing

Attendance information may be shared with relevant professionals where there is a lawful basis and where sharing is necessary to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

This may include:

- children's social care;
- the local safeguarding partnership;
- health professionals;
- the child's school or another early years provider where appropriate;
- the local authority; and
- Ofsted or another statutory authority where required.

Information will be shared in accordance with the nursery's **Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy** and safeguarding procedures.

22. Record keeping

The nursery will maintain appropriate records of:

- attendance;
- absence;
- reasons for absence;
- contact attempts;
- conversations with parents and carers;
- attendance support plans;
- safeguarding referrals or concerns;
- professional discussions; and
- actions taken.

Records will be accurate, factual, proportionate and stored securely.

23. Staff training

All staff will be made aware of this policy during induction.

Staff will understand:

- how to record attendance accurately;

- how to respond to unexplained absence;
- when to contact parents and emergency contacts;
- how attendance can relate to safeguarding;
- when to report concerns to the DSL or Manager; and
- how to maintain confidentiality.

Attendance and absence concerns will be incorporated into safeguarding training and supervision where appropriate.

24. Working in partnership with parents

Impact Montessori Nursery recognises that families may experience circumstances that affect attendance.

We will work collaboratively with parents and carers to:

- understand individual circumstances;
- identify barriers to attendance;
- agree practical solutions;
- provide appropriate information and signposting;
- support children returning following absence; and
- ensure the child's welfare remains the central consideration.

Parents are encouraged to speak to the Nursery Manager at the earliest opportunity if they anticipate difficulties with their child's attendance.

25. Policy monitoring and review

The Nursery Manager is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

The policy will be reviewed:

- at least annually;
- following significant changes to EYFS requirements or government guidance;
- following a serious attendance or safeguarding incident; or
- where monitoring identifies that changes are required.

The nursery will ensure that the current policy is available to parents and carers.

Related policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Uncollected Child Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Illness and Infection Control Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- SEND Policy
- Settling-In and Key Person Policy
- Complaints Policy

- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Legal and regulatory framework

This policy has regard to:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers, current version;
- Childcare Act 2006;
- relevant DfE early education and childcare funding guidance;
- relevant local safeguarding arrangements; and
- applicable data protection legislation.

The current EYFS framework is mandatory for early years settings in England and sets the standards providers must meet to ensure children learn and develop well and are kept safe. GOV.UK

This policy was adopted by: Impact Montessori Nursery

Date adopted: _____

Date to be reviewed: _____

Signed on behalf of the provider: _____

Name of signatory: _____

Role of signatory: Nursery Manager / Owner / Director

Next review date: _____