



Vita et Pax Preparatory School
Established 1936

Attendance Policy (Nursery)

Policy Originator	Nursery Manager / Head Teacher
Approved by	Governing Body
Governor Responsible	Chair
Date Approved	29 July 2026
Status	Statutory (EYFS statutory framework, para 3.12)
Review Period	Annually (next: July 2027)

This policy applies to Little Vitas Nursery and to all Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision at Vita et Pax Preparatory School for children below compulsory school age. It is available on the nursery website and in hard copy from the school office, and is reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

1. Why Attendance Matters in the Early Years

Children in our nursery are below compulsory school age, so the legal duties that apply to school attendance do not apply in the same way. Regular attendance nonetheless matters a great deal. Young children settle faster, form a secure attachment to their key person, and make better progress across the seven areas of learning when they attend consistently. Predictable routines help children feel safe.

Attendance also has a safeguarding purpose. Knowing where a child is, every session, is one of the ways we keep children safe. A child who stops attending without explanation may be a child who needs help.

2. Our Expectations of Parents and Carers

- Bring your child regularly and on time for the sessions you have booked. Arriving on time helps your child join the welcome routine and settle with their friends.
- Tell us as soon as possible — and by 9.30am at the latest — if your child will be absent, giving the reason and the expected date of return. Telephone 020 8449 8336 or email the office.
- Tell us promptly about any change to your contact details, emergency contacts or collection arrangements.
- Give us more than two emergency contact numbers where you can. If we cannot reach you we must be able to reach someone who knows your child, and holding only one or two numbers too often means we reach nobody.
- Keep your child at home if they are unwell, and follow the exclusion periods for infectious illness set out in our Health and Safety and Food and Allergies information. Please tell us what the illness is, so we can watch for it spreading.
- Take holidays outside your booked sessions where you reasonably can, and let us know in advance of any planned absence.

3. What We Do

- We take a register at the start of every session and record the actual time each child arrives and leaves, and who collected them. This record is retained in line with our Data Protection Policy and is available to our inspectorate on request.
- We record the hours each child attends, including funded hours, as required for early years funding purposes.
- We follow up every absence in a timely manner. Where a child is absent and we have not heard from you, we contact you the same morning. Where a child is absent without notification, or for a prolonged period, we make attempts to contact the parents and carers and the alternative emergency contacts held on the child's record. Every attempt is recorded with the time and the outcome.
- We keep a written note of the reason for each absence.
- We monitor patterns of attendance each half term.

4. Unexplained and Persistent Absence

Where absence is unexplained, or where a pattern of absence emerges, we follow these steps. Our starting assumption is always that a family may need support, not that they are at fault.

The statutory framework does not fix a number of days at which an absence becomes prolonged. We consider the patterns and trends in a child's absences alongside their personal circumstances and exercise professional judgement, giving particular consideration to the vulnerability of the child, the vulnerability of the parents and carers, and what is known about the family's home life. A short absence for a child we already hold a concern about may warrant more urgency than a longer one for a child we do not.

1. Same day. We telephone the parents and carers on every number held. Where the child is absent without notification, we also telephone the alternative emergency contacts on the child's record. Every attempt is recorded with the time and the outcome.
2. Continued unexplained absence. If we have been unable to make contact with anyone after two consecutive sessions, the Nursery Manager informs the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
3. Pattern of absence. Where attendance falls persistently, the Nursery Manager invites the parents to a conversation to understand what is happening and to agree what would help. This is recorded and reviewed.
4. Safeguarding concern. Where absence is unexplained and prolonged, where we cannot make contact with the family at all, or where absence coincides with any other welfare concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to the Enfield Children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 020 8379 2507. Where we have exhausted the parents and carers and all alternative emergency contacts and still cannot establish that a child is safe and well, we will request a police welfare check. Where a child is thought to be at immediate risk, we contact the police on 999 without delay.

Where a child of compulsory school age attends any part of our provision, the duties in the Department for Education's guidance Working together to improve school attendance and the children missing education arrangements apply, and the school follows them in full.

Raising concerns. Any member of staff, including students and volunteers, who believes that an absence is not being followed up as this policy requires, or who has any other concern about poor or unsafe practice, must raise it with the Nursery Manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where they feel unable to do so, or feel their concern is not being addressed, they should use the school's Whistleblowing Policy, which sets out the routes available to them including the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line. Concerns raised in good faith are taken seriously by the senior leadership team, and no one is disadvantaged for raising one.

5. Children Who Leave the Nursery

- Parents are asked to give notice in writing when their child will be leaving, in line with the terms set out in our admissions and fees information.
- Where a child leaves, we record the date of leaving and, where known, the setting or school they are moving to.
- If a child stops attending and we are unable to establish where they have gone, the Designated Safeguarding Lead treats this as a potential child missing education and refers to the local authority.
- Learning and development records are shared with the receiving setting or school with parental consent, to support a smooth transition.

6. Funded Entitlements

Where a child accesses a government-funded entitlement, attendance is recorded and claimed in line with Enfield Council's provider agreement. Persistent non-attendance may affect a funding claim. We will always discuss this with parents before it affects a child's place, and no child loses a funded place without the matter first being considered by the Nursery Manager and Head Teacher.

7. Records and Data Protection

Attendance records contain personal data and are processed in accordance with the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and our Data Protection Policy. They are kept secure, retained in line with our retention schedule, and made available to our inspectorate, to the local authority for funding purposes, and to safeguarding partners where lawful. They are accessible only to those who have a right or a professional need to see them.

Parents and carers are given access to the records we hold about their child, including attendance records, unless an exemption under the Data Protection Act 2018 applies. Requests are handled under our Data Protection Policy.

Related Policies and Documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Uncollected Child and Missing Child Policy
- Settling-In Policy (Nursery)
- Admissions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Complaints Procedure

Key Contacts

- Nursery Manager: Mrs K. Newton
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mr D. May, Headmaster
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Mrs K. Newton
- School Office: 020 8449 8336
- Enfield Children's MASH: 020 8379 2507

Approved by: Governing Body of Vita et Pax Preparatory School

Date: 29 July 2026