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Attendance Policy

Reviewed: 1 September 2025
Next Review Due: 1 September 2026

Policy Statement

At St Mark's Preschool, we are committed to ensuring the regular attendance of all children to support their wellbeing, learning, and development. Attendance is a key part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework (revised 2021), which highlights the importance of identifying and addressing attendance concerns as part of a strong safeguarding culture.

Regular attendance enables children to benefit fully from their early education and helps us to fulfil our duty of care in ensuring that all children registered with us are safe and well.

Opening Times

St Mark's Preschool is open **Monday to Friday, from 8:50am to 3:00pm**, **term time only**.

- The preschool gate will be open for **drop-off from 8:50am to 9:00am**, and for **collection from 2:50pm to 3:00pm**.
- Parents and carers are kindly asked to ensure that children are **collected by 3:00pm**, to allow staff sufficient time to carry out end-of-day tasks and prepare the environment and resources for the following day.
- If you arrive after 9:00am, you are still very welcome — we understand that mornings can be unpredictable. However, if you arrive when the gate is shut, please use the ramp to ring the bell at the front door to gain entry.
- To maintain the safety and security of our site, we ask that any parent arriving late closes and secures the gate behind them.
- We do our best to open the gate as promptly as possible, however, due to our ongoing commitment to safeguarding the children in our care, we will not open the doors to Preschool parents if there are children are using the toilets or getting changed. We appreciate your patience with us on these occasions.

Recording Attendance

- Attendance is recorded at the start of each session — morning, lunchtime, and afternoon.
- At morning drop-off, you will see a member of the senior management team on the gate, using our online attendance register to record your child as present.

- We follow this up with a headcount inside and ensure that any messages from parents are passed on to Room Leaders.
- We do not record 'late arrivals' — your child will simply be signed in when they arrive.
- If you are collecting your child during the school day (e.g. after lunch), a member of staff will sign your child out on our online register, and Room Leaders will adjust their headcounts accordingly to maintain accurate supervision ratios.
- We operate a staff ratio of at least 1:4 children in Blue Dragons and 1:8 children in Green Dragons at all times. Therefore we kindly ask that arrive promptly if you are dropping off or collecting your child in the middle of the day, ie before or after our lunch session, so that we can maintain our staff ratios to ensure all the children in our care are well supervised at all times.

Reporting Absences

We ask that parents/carers:

- Inform us by 9:00am (for morning sessions) or by 12:30pm (for afternoon sessions) if their child will be absent.
- Provide the reason for absence and an expected return date if known.
- Contact the preschool each day their child is absent, unless a return date has already been confirmed.

There will be someone monitoring the preschool office phone and admin email from 8:00am each morning, so you are welcome to report an absence early if needed.

Absences can be reported via:
📞 Phone: 01722 330382
📧 Email: admin@stmarks-preschool.co.uk
Or by speaking directly with a staff member.

Monitoring and Following Up on Absences

In line with the EYFS framework (3.75), we have procedures to identify patterns of absence and to ensure children's welfare is protected.

We will:

- Follow up any unexplained absences by contacting the child's parent/carer by 10:30am on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them. Please ensure your contact details are up to date on your registration paperwork and that a minimum of two emergency contacts are shared with us, in case we cannot reach you.
- Escalate to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if we are unable to make contact after two days of unexplained absence. Our DSL is Nikki Soddy (Manager).
- Monitor attendance patterns, including frequent absences, persistent lateness, or erratic attendance.
- Discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity and offer support where appropriate.

Where necessary, we may liaise with external agencies such as health visitors, Early Help, or Children's Social Care in order to support our Preschool families.

Safeguarding and Duty of Care

Safeguarding is central to all we do at St Mark's Preschool. The EYFS (Section 3 – Safeguarding and Welfare) requires providers to take appropriate action when children are missing education.

We recognise that:

- A child who is absent without explanation may be at risk.
- Poor attendance can be an indicator of wider issues, including family stress, neglect, or safeguarding concerns.
- We have a legal duty to promote the welfare of children and to act swiftly when we are concerned about a child's wellbeing.

Any concerns regarding attendance and a child's safety will be recorded, monitored, and addressed in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.

Support for Families

We understand that there may be valid reasons for absence, including illness, medical appointments, or family circumstances. We aim to work in partnership with parents/carers to support good attendance and resolve any issues that may be affecting a child's ability to attend regularly.

Please speak to your Room Leader if you need help managing your child's attendance or if there are any changes in circumstances we should be aware of.

Holidays and Extended Absences

We recognise that for many families whose children are not old enough to be legally obliged to attend school settings, holidays and breaks may sometimes fall during term time.

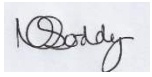
If a parent/carer plans to take their child out of preschool for a holiday or extended leave, they must:

- Inform the setting in writing, which can be done by emailing the preschool at admin@stmarks-preschool.co.uk
- Provide dates of absence and reasons for the time away.

Prolonged or repeated absences will be monitored and discussed with the family to ensure the child's wellbeing and learning are supported.

Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually and in line with any updates to the EYFS statutory framework or local safeguarding procedures.

Signed:  (Manager, St Mark's Preschool)

Date: 1/9/25