ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR EARLY YEARS

Although statutory attendance requirements apply from the term after a child turns five, at Charlton Mackrell Preschool we recognise the importance of establishing strong attendance habits from the earliest stages of education. Regular attendance in Early Years lays the foundation for future learning, wellbeing, and safeguarding.

1. **Expectations and Responsibilities**
   - Parents and carers are expected to ensure that children attend their Early Years provision regularly and punctually, even if attendance is not yet compulsory.
   - A daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises, their hours of attendance and the names of each child's key person and Charlton Mackrell Preschool will maintain accurate daily attendance records for all children in our provision
   - Charlton Mackrell Preschool recognises that regular attendance supports children's safety, wellbeing, learning and development. Patterns of poor, irregular or unexplained attendance may indicate safeguarding or welfare concerns and will be monitored accordingly.
   - All staff have a responsibility to remain professionally curious, monitor attendance patterns and report concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
   - Absences should be reported by parents/carers on the first day, with a clear reason provided. Unexplained or prolonged absences will be followed up in line with safeguarding procedures.

2. **Safeguarding and Early Intervention**
   - In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and the EYFS statutory framework, persistent or unexplained absence in Early Years may be treated as a safeguarding concern.
   - The setting will maintain robust first day absence procedures and promptly follow up any unexplained absences and escalate concerns where necessary, including the use of multiple emergency contact and referrals to external agencies if appropriate.
   - The DSL will review emerging or persistent attendance concerns and use this information to assess whether they may indicate unmet needs or safeguarding risks.
   - Attendance will be monitored as a safeguarding responsibility, with particular attention to vulnerable children and those receiving additional support.
   - Attendance concerns that raise welfare or safeguarding issues will be escalated and addressed in line with the setting's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

3. **Promoting Positive Attendance**
   - Charlton Mackrell Preschool will work in partnership with parents to promote a culture where good attendance is valued and upholds the benefits of regular attendance from the outset, using induction meetings, newsletters, and parent workshops to reinforce expectations.
   - Staff will be trained to recognise the impact of absence in Early Years and to respond with sensitivity and support.

4. Policy Alignment

This aligns with:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026), which encourages working together with children, families and partner agencies, so that we can remove barriers, strengthen engagement and ensure every child benefits from regular attendance. It also continues the emphasis that early intervention and partnership with families builds positive attendance habits.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), which identifies absence as a potential safeguarding indicator and being absent from a setting can be a warning sign that a child may be at risk and should trigger professional curiosity and safeguarding consideration.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2026), which requires providers to have clear procedures for managing absence and promoting children's welfare and attendance is now explicitly recognised as a safeguarding responsibility, not just an administrative matter.

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