

Pre-school Attendance Policy

Policy document provenance

Approver:	Local Governing Committee
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Reviewer:	Headteacher – Primary Phase
Policy owner:	Assistant Headteacher - Safeguarding
Policy Author(s):	Assistant Headteacher - Safeguarding
Date of next review:	September 2026 (to align with KCSIE updates)
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	V1.1 <i>(Insert date of any in year amendment)</i>
Summary of key changes made since last review:	New policy to ensure KCSIE 2025 requirements and the EYFS statutory framework are fulfilled.
Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. Should no substantive changes be required at this point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.	
Related policies and documents:	MARK Education Trust Safeguarding & Child Protection policy MARK Education Trust Attendance policy

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1. Guiding Principles

MARK Education Trust is committed to providing the best possible education for all its pupils and students, and for keeping them safe whilst they are attending our schools.

This policy sets out MARK Education Trust's rationale and strategy for managing preschool pupil attendance as required by the government's statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (2025) and also by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

Good attendance promotes better outcomes for children. It is essential that children feel settled and take full advantage of the learning and development opportunities available to them at pre- school, and in later life. Good attendance promotes school readiness.

2. Why good attendance matters

Form good habits

Children who attend every planned session develop a feel for the rhythm of the week. They gain a sense of security from the regular timetable. This also helps form good habits for school attendance.

Develop secure relationships

Young children find it easier to build and sustain social relationships when they attend their regular sessions.

For some families, particularly at times of stress, regular attendance allows parents to get other things done and helps them enjoy spending time with the child when he or she is at home.

Build self-esteem

Children who rarely miss sessions and arrive on time:

- know what is going on and what to expect
- feel more confident with the adults and the other children
- have more opportunities to become involved and contribute their ideas

Cultivate routines and regularity

If a child is late or misses sessions regularly, they can find it harder to:

- settle in
- understand what the other children and adults are talking about or doing.

Some children may need flexibility when they first start attending. The key person will support with settling in to:

- help the child become familiar with the setting
- offer a settled relationship for the child
- build a relationship with their parents and/or carers

Young children can sometimes be reluctant to attend. They may be tired or want to stay at home with their parents. Try reminding them that they will have a wonderful time with their friends, playing and learning.

We can signpost you to support if needed, for example:

- with implementing bedtime routines
- referrals to other agencies such as Early Help, Health Visitors or Family Hubs

Enhance learning and development

We plan every session, and we want to take every opportunity to help children thrive and learn.

- Experiences gained in one session at the setting can support further development by attending further sessions. By missing sessions children may miss valuable planned learning opportunities.
- Children learn in diverse ways; through play with others and through being in the company of practitioners who support their learning and development.

3. Requirements for early years settings

In Early Years provisions, we are aware that attendance is not compulsory until school age. However, not attending planned sessions could be an indicator of other concerns. We have certain statutory regulations that we must follow, and this is why we ask parents for information on absences.

The EYFS Statutory Framework 2025 informs us of the records we must keep. We must follow up absences as part of our safeguarding requirements. We must monitor absence patterns and families' personal circumstances. This helps us decide whether we should refer concerns to children's social care and/or request a police welfare check.

Ofsted inspectors will ask us how well we collaborate with parents to promote children's attendance. The focus is on children forming good habits for future learning and better outcomes when school attendance becomes statutory.

4. Early Years Education Entitlement (EYEE)

If we are claiming funding for your child and your child is regularly not attending their sessions, we will speak to you about how we can help. For example, rearranging the hours and days required. We must tell the Early Years Funding team about any absence over two weeks, or consistent absence throughout a funding period. If we do not, we could lose our funding.

5. Absence procedure for parents

Give us advance notice of holidays and other planned absences as soon as possible.

Inform us as soon as possible if your child cannot attend and tell us why. Let us know whether this is for the one session or if it will be for longer.

Inform us if your child will be arriving late so we can plan for this and ensure a safe and smooth transition into the setting.

Please refer to the Appendix for how to do this.

6. Absence procedures for our setting

If not informed of an absence, we will contact parents on the first day a child does not attend.

If we are unable to contact parents or carers we may need to try the emergency contacts. We will use our professional judgement about how soon this is necessary.

We will record the absence reason. Is this an unavoidable absence or an acceptable reason? For example:

- child illness
- illness of siblings or parents
- health services appointments
- holidays

- religious observance
- emergency circumstances.

Absences and late arrivals will be monitored and recorded by the setting. The setting or provider will make every effort to discuss the matter with you and take steps support improved attendance.

If your child also attends another setting and we have concerns about absence, we may share this with them for safeguarding purposes.

7. Review and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed by the Primary Headteacher and DSL annually in line with statutory guidance.

Appendix - Attendance reporting procedures for Hailsham Academy pre-school

Arrive between 8:45am and 9:00am

Report absence by 8.15am

How to report an absence or medical /dental appointment:

- a) Via ARBOR account
- b) Phone: 01323 841468
- c) Email: attendance@hccat.net

How to notify of a planned absence: Email: attendance@hccat.net

Further information found on website here: <https://www.hailsham-academy.org/mesmerize/attendance/>