Summerseat Methodist School

EYFS Attendance Policy

"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full." John 10:10

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Personalised for school by:	Sarah Brown
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Approved by LAB:	
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Version Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Reason for Change
28.8.25	A Burkes	1	This EYFS Attendance Policy has been developed to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements of the 2025 Early Years Statutory Framework.
12.8.26	A Burkes	2	Updated to reflect the September 2026 EYFS Statutory Framework and any relevant expectations within Working Together to Safeguard Children *(2026)*. Section 1 & 4: Updated statutory references and attendance policy requirements. Section 4: Clarified emergency contact requirements and nursery place review arrangements. Section 6: Strengthened first-day response and unexplained absence procedures. Section 8: Added professional judgement regarding prolonged absence, attendance patterns and vulnerability factors. Section 9: Enhanced attendance monitoring arrangements; introduced Attendance Lead responsibilities; added SEND, disability, medical condition, allergy and reasonable adjustment provisions. Throughout: Strengthened safeguarding, attendance monitoring and family partnership expectations.

Summerseat Methodist Vision & Values

At Summerseat Methodist Primary, our vision, ethos and values are at the core of everything we do. They underpin our teaching and learning, and provide an environment which prepares our children to become lifelong learners; creating a safe and inclusive learning environment that nurtures individuality and enhances potential.

"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full."
John 10:10

As a church school, we have identified and uphold the following core Christian values that help us achieve our ethos and vision: joy, teamwork, love, respect, care, trust, forgiveness and equality.

Safeguarding Statement

At the Epworth Education Trust we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We work to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. The procedures contained in the Safeguarding Policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors.

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1. Introduction

This policy outlines attendance expectations and legal responsibilities within Summerseat Methodist School's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which includes Nursery and Reception. It should be read in conjunction with the whole 'School Attendance Policy,' which details broader procedures and protocols.

This policy is shaped by the EYFS Statutory Framework (2026), which requires providers to have arrangements in place to promote children's welfare, maintain attendance records, follow up absences and support children's safety and wellbeing. This policy also takes into account the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2026) to ensure our attendance procedures support our wider safeguarding duties. It also reflects wider safeguarding legislation, such as the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, and local authority guidelines ensuring a secure, supportive foundation for children's learning and wellbeing

The school's Attendance Lead is Sarah Brown and can be contacted via the school office for advice, guidance and support regarding attendance concerns.

2. Rationale

At Summerseat Methodist School, we want every child to get the best possible start to their education. Coming to school regularly in the early years helps children settle in, build strong friendships, get used to daily routines, and make good progress in their learning. This policy sets out how we support and encourage good attendance in our EYFS settings, which include Nursery and Reception. It follows the 2026 EYFS Statutory Framework, which highlights the importance of regular attendance, keeping accurate records, and having up-to-date contact information for all families. These steps help us keep children safe and give them the best chance to flourish.

3. The Importance of Attendance in the Early Years

Although children are not of compulsory school age until the term after their fifth birthday, the 2026 EYFS Framework makes it clear that regular attendance is important for supporting children's welfare, safety, learning and development. We therefore encourage all families to establish positive attendance habits from the outset of their child's educational journey.

Children who attend consistently are more likely to:

- Feel secure in their environment
- Develop meaningful relationships with staff and peers
- Make stronger progress across all areas of learning
- Build resilience and confidence
- Develop a sense of belonging within the school community
- Experience smoother transitions between classes and stages of learning

Irregular attendance can affect a child's emotional wellbeing, learning, friendships and confidence. By attending regularly, children are able to benefit fully from the experiences, routines and opportunities that support their development.

4. Safeguarding and Legal Requirements

The school maintains accurate attendance records for all children in the EYFS. In accordance with paragraph 3.104 of the EYFS Statutory Framework (2026), a daily record is maintained of children attending the provision and their hours of attendance. For children registered as pupils of the school, attendance is also recorded in accordance with the statutory school attendance requirements.

In line with section 3.11 of the EYFS Statutory Framework (2026), all absences will be followed up in a timely manner. Where a child is absent without notification, or for a prolonged period, the

school will make appropriate attempts to contact parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts and will consider any patterns or safeguarding concerns.

In accordance with section 3.12 of the EYFS Framework, we must have an attendance policy that we share with parents and carers. This policy sets out our expectations for reporting child absences and the actions we will take if a child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period.

Additionally, in accordance with section 3.99 of the EYFS Framework, we must hold up-to-date emergency contact details for parents and carers. Wherever possible, we will hold more than two emergency contact numbers for each child to help ensure that we can quickly contact a responsible adult in the event of an emergency or unexplained absence.

These details must be provided when completing the new starter paperwork and parents/carers must inform the school promptly of any changes to contact information.

5. Reporting Absence

If your child is going to be absent from school for any reason, you must inform the school before registration closes at 9am for morning sessions and by 1 pm for afternoon nursery sessions. You can do this by calling the school office and leaving a message on the absence line. Please include:

- Your child's full name and class
- The reason for the absence (please be specific, e.g., "chickenpox" rather than "unwell")
- The anticipated date of return

If a return date is not known, please call on each day of absence unless otherwise agreed with the school.

Why we ask you to phone: Telephone contact allows us to speak with you directly, ask any necessary questions about your child's wellbeing, and ensure we have accurate information to record in our registers. This is particularly important for safeguarding purposes.

While messages via See saw or email can supplement telephone contact, they should not be used as the sole method of reporting absence as these cannot always be viewed in a timely manner and do not allow for immediate two-way communication.

Please note: Children who have had an illness where sickness and/or diarrhoea was prevalent must remain at home and not return to school for 48 hours after their last bout of sickness/diarrhoea, in line with NHS guidance. More information can be found here: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS

6. Unexplained Absences and Welfare Checks

All unexplained absences will be followed up on the first day of absence, and absences that may be considered prolonged will be followed up in a timely manner. If we have not received notification of your child's absence, we will contact you by telephone before 10:00am on the first day of absence. We will attempt to contact you using all available contact numbers. If we are unable to make contact with you, we will then contact your named emergency contacts. If we are unable to make contact with your named emergency contacts, we may conduct a home visit to ensure your child's safety and wellbeing.

In addition to following up individual absences, we will consider wider attendance patterns where this is relevant to a child's welfare, wellbeing or educational engagement.

As part of our statutory safeguarding duty under section 3.11 of the EYFS Framework and Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance, we are required to follow up on all unexplained

absences, including for children in nursery and reception. In most cases, absences are resolved through contact with parents, carers or emergency contacts. However, where we are unable to establish a child's whereabouts, or where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, we must involve Children's Social Care or request a welfare check from the police to ensure the child is safe.

When deciding if a child's absence should be considered as prolonged, we will use our professional judgement and consider:

- Patterns and trends in the child's absences
- The child's personal circumstances
- The child's vulnerability, and the parent's and/or carer's vulnerability
- The child's home life

Where concerns exist about a child's safety or welfare, referrals to Children's Social Care and/or requests for police welfare checks will be made in line with our safeguarding duties.

7. Lateness and Punctuality

Being on time helps your child start the day or session smoothly. The school day begins promptly at 8.50am for Reception and 9am for the Nursery morning session. The Nursery afternoon session starts at 1pm. Please ensure your child arrives at school or Nursery on time and is ready to start their session.

Arriving late can be unsettling for young children and may mean they miss important parts of the daily routine, such as welcome activities, group times and learning opportunities. Establishing good punctuality habits from an early age helps children feel secure and confident. If lateness becomes a regular concern, we will work with you to understand any difficulties and provide support where possible.

If your child arrives after registration has closed, please report to the school office so that we can update our records and ensure your child is marked present for safeguarding purposes. Persistent lateness will be monitored in the same way as absence.

The Nursery morning session finishes at 12pm and the afternoon session finishes at 3pm In Reception, children are dismissed at 3.20pm.

As we are an EYFS unit, children in Nursery are welcome to start at 8:50am when the doors open and can stay until 3:20pm.

If you are delayed collecting your child, please contact the school office as soon as possible so that we can reassure your child and make appropriate arrangements.

8. Persistent Absence

For monitoring purposes, the school will use absence of 10% or more of scheduled sessions as an indicator that attendance may require additional consideration or support, including for children below compulsory school age. (For a child attending 5 days per week, this is approximately 1 day every 2 weeks across the full year). For school-age pupils this aligns with the national definition of persistent absence.

We regularly monitor attendance, punctuality and patterns of absence on a weekly basis to help ensure children can benefit from all the learning, experiences and routines that support their development. When reviewing attendance, we consider each child's individual circumstances, any vulnerabilities, family circumstances, health needs, SEND, and any barriers that may be affecting attendance.

We recognise that attendance difficulties can sometimes indicate that additional support may be needed. Where concerns arise, we will seek to understand the reasons for absence and consider what support may help improve attendance.

Penalty notices and other statutory attendance enforcement measures do not apply until a child reaches compulsory school age. A child reaches compulsory school age on 31st December, 31st March or 31st August following their 5th birthday, whichever comes first. This means that some children become compulsory school age during Reception year. Where this applies, the statutory attendance and enforcement arrangements set out in the School Attendance Policy will apply.

Frequent or unexplained absences may raise concerns about a child's welfare or wellbeing and will be reviewed and followed up as part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

Where attendance remains a significant concern despite support being offered, the school may seek advice from relevant professionals and, for Nursery children, discuss whether the current nursery arrangement remains appropriate for the child's needs and circumstances.

For children in Reception, attendance procedures will be applied in accordance with statutory guidance and the school's Attendance Policy to ensure children receive their full educational entitlement.

For details on the National Framework on Penalty Notices for children of compulsory school age in the Reception Class, please refer to *Section 6 – 'Leave of Absence'* in the Summerseat Methodist School Attendance Policy.

9. Attendance Monitoring and Support

We regularly review attendance, punctuality, patterns of absence and frequent illness for all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where concerns arise, we will discuss these with parents/carers to better understand any underlying difficulties and identify appropriate support.

Where appropriate, we may:

- Invite you to meet with our attendance lead
- Agree a supportive plan to help improve attendance
- Offer Early / Family Help or signpost you to external support services

All support is provided in a non-judgemental, supportive and relational way with your child's wellbeing at the heart of our approach.

The school's Attendance Lead Sarah Brown, 01706 823427 has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance, identifying emerging concerns and coordinating support for families.

Where a child has a long-term medical condition, an allergy requiring ongoing management, SEND, or another identified health need, the school will work with parents/carers and relevant professionals to ensure appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are in place. Attendance will always be considered in the context of the child's individual circumstances and any agreed healthcare plans.

10. Leave During Term Time

We ask that medical and dental appointments are arranged outside of school or nursery hours wherever possible. If your child needs to be absent during the school day for an appointment, we may ask to see evidence of the appointment.

Requests for leave of absence must be made in advance using the appropriate school form. Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and each request will be considered individually, taking account of the specific facts and circumstances. A family holiday

or other absence for leisure or recreation would not normally be considered an exceptional circumstance.

11. Working in Partnership with Families

We value our relationship with parents and carers and believe that children's attendance improves when schools and families work together. We are committed to building positive relationships based on trust, respect and open communication.

If you are experiencing any circumstances that may affect your child's attendance, please speak to us as early as possible. We are here to listen, understand your circumstances and work with you to identify any support that may help. By working together, we can help remove barriers to attendance and ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Together, we can give your child the strong start they need to flourish emotionally, socially, and academically.

12. Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this policy or need to report an absence, please contact the **School Office**: 01706 823427

For further advice or support, please contact our EYFS Lead / Setting Manager: Mollie Jones or our Attendance Lead: Sarah Brown

This policy is reviewed in line with the 'Summerseat Methodist School Attendance Policy' and updated on an annual basis to ensure it remains current and effective.