



Amington Heath Primary School and Nursery

Nursery Attendance and Payment Policy

School Own Policy

Approved on: 20/09/2023

Reviewed: 17/11/26

Review by: 12/11/2027

Amington Heath Primary School are committed to ensuring every child receives the best start in life. Childcare settings across the county offer a safe and secure learning environment where children are nurtured to develop their skills and become ready for school. Research shows that children who attend high quality pre-school provision obtain better grades at GCSE level than those who do not.

As a childcare provider, we recognise the importance of monitoring attendance and will encourage families to participate in early education by ensuring that children take advantage of their funded entitlement of hours wherever possible. This policy defines how Amington Heath can work with the Local Authority and other organisations to improve attendance and to promote the welfare of children in early education.

Aims

Amington Heath Primary School must:

- Ensure all children/parents that are eligible for funded places are encouraged to take advantage of them
- Ensure all parents are supported to understand the importance of consistent routines and regular attendance for their child starting at the session time mutually agreed
- Develop and maintain effective partnerships with parents and other organisations to tackle issues which may result in inconsistent attendance/ absence whilst recognising the individual needs and circumstances of children/families.
- Develop positive and consistent communication between home and setting, providing guidance and support as appropriate.
- Initiate an Early Help Assessment (EHA) where issues of sporadic attendance and absence cannot be addressed by the setting in isolation and involvement from other services is required.

Attendance

Although nursery age children's attendance at Amington Heath Primary School is not mandatory, staff encourage children and parents to develop good habits of attendance in preparation for statutory school age education. Staff are also alert to patterns of absence that may indicate wider safeguarding concerns. The school works with parents to promote

children's good attendance, especially the attendance of children for whom the provider receives the early years pupil premium.

Regular attendance is essential to ensure children benefit fully from their nursery place. Where attendance becomes irregular, our Family Support Worker will contact parents/carers to discuss any challenges and offer guidance or support.

If, after this support, attendance does not improve and sessions continue to be missed, the nursery may withdraw the place in order to offer it to another child on the waiting list.

Funding Agreement

The current and revised Provider Agreement states:

15.9 Providers must maintain an up to date record of attendance for all children for whom they provide EEF places and make it available to the Council when required along with other monitoring information. The Council shall ensure that Providers are not penalised by withdrawing funding for short term absence and the Council will pay for a maximum of twenty (20) days absence (whether over consecutive or sporadic days) within a single term time period for which the child would normally have attended for EEF hours.

For any amount of absence that exceeds the twenty-day period, the Provider must adjust the claim in the related amendment task for the term.

However, the Council shall use its discretion and review cases when there is fair reason for absence. The review will determine if funding should be applied for a longer period than the first twenty days of a child's absence. Reasons for which the Council will review extended periods of absence can be found in the Attendance Policy.

Requests to review absence beyond the first twenty days in a single term, should be submitted to: eefportal@staffordshire.gov.uk outlining the reasons for absence.

Term Time period parameters:

- 1st January - 31st March (spring)
- 1st April – 31st August (summer)
- 1st September – 31st December (autumn)

15.10 There could be occasions when a child does not consistently attend for the EEF hours in a day as arranged and therefore absence does not meet the full day parameter as noted in clause 15.9. The

Council can review such cases and consider reclaiming monies if the overall absence is forty percent (40%) or more within the same term. Providers have responsibility to encourage families to attend for the funded hours they have been offered and the benefits there are for children with good attendance. Where absence is due to consistently late drops off/ early collections or Parents consistently not making sessions without reasonable explanation, the Provider should discuss if the package on offer is suitable for their requirements.

Supporting families with attendance

If attendance is sporadic and inconsistent, Amington Heath Primary may wish to initiate an EHA to work with others to address this issue. However, there may be instances where it may be necessary to involve our local family support provider who could work with the family to address any issues preventing regular attendance.

Sporadic and inconsistent attendance is defined as when a child is consistently not attending the provision for their set pattern of hours. Amington Heath Primary School must use their discretion on when to discuss this with parents and involve other services.

If a reason has not been given for repeated absence and contact cannot be re-established with the family, Amington Heath Primary School may wish to involve the health visiting service if staff have concerns. Consent would **not** be required under these circumstances, as this is covered within the Parent Declaration form. Providers can contact The Education Safeguarding Advice Service if they wish to seek further advice and guidance.

Staff must continue to follow Amington Heath Primary School's policy and Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board guidance when they have concerns that a child is at risk of immediate harm or neglect. [Further information on where and who to report to and listening to the child's voice](#) can be found on our website.

If, after this support, attendance does not improve and sessions continue to be missed, the nursery may withdraw the place in order to offer it to another child on the waiting list.

Dealing with absence from funded sessions

Amington Heath Primary School and Nursery will inform the EEF Finance Team when a child has been absent from nursery and absence falls within the parameters of clauses 15.9 and 15.10 as noted above.

The Council must be clear in cases where there is no valid reason for child absence that has gone beyond the 20 day or 40% parameters outlined in 15.9 and 15.10 of the Provider Agreement (which the Council will fund), Amington Heath Primary School must amend funding for that term to reflect the attendance from that point. In cases where amendments have not occurred the Council have the discretion to reclaim monies for such absence.

Amington Heath Primary School are advised to discuss attendance with parents, and where there is a trend of absence without a valid reason, it could be appropriate to determine a more suitable funding claim that is in line with the actual average attendance of the child.

Amington Heath Primary School are responsible for monitoring absence and recording of attendance as outlined in the EYFS, which is now reviewed by Ofsted at inspections. Where staff are unsure about absence, handling a claim, or wish to request a review for extending EEF, staff are encouraged to seek advice as soon as possible by contacting the Early Education and Childcare Team via email at: eeac@staffordshire.gov.uk

Amington Heath Primary School must outline:

- details/ reason of child absence so far,
- expected absence return date (if applicable)
- child and parent information,
- proof of reason for absence (if applicable), i.e. doctors note, letter (parent consent required).

Reviewing a child case to extend funding

The reason for an extending funding will be influenced by the circumstances (i.e. child sickness) and when in the term the 21st day (or 41%) of absence of funded hours has occurred. i.e. if this was in the last two weeks of the term it would be reasonable for the Council to fund the child for the full term and the case will be reviewed again at the beginning of the following term.

Circumstances where the Council must consider extending funding that prevents the child regularly attending for EEF sessions could include:

- Serious child illness
- Child sickness (i.e. pox, flu),
- Child injury/ accident
- Treatment (i.e. hospital care),
- Welfare concerns (i.e. LAC, in and out of care),

- Family bereavement,
- Provider breakout (i.e. chicken pox),
- Physical Disability/ Learning difficulties.
- Professional involvement i.e. Families First
- Mental health
- Parent circumstances (i.e illness)

This information is to give an indicator of a valid reason for absence where extending the funded period can be reviewed that would align to clauses 15.9 or 15.10 of the Provider Agreement.

The decision to extend funding is done on a case by case basis and individual cases will be reviewed at every half term period. The Council will ensure the provider and parent is advised.

If child absence is not clear or has a valid basis

The Council must be clear in cases where there is no clear or justifiable reason for reviewing extended periods of absence for EEF, funding will be amended to a more appropriate level based against the child attendance for the term. Reasons for absence must be within the parameters of those outlined in 5.1.

If a parent offers no explanation or proof of why the child did not attend, or simply kept the child home for extended periods (above notwithstanding) or doing something else other than attending and missing booked for EEF sessions at a childcare provider, such reasons are not deemed justifiable reasons for absence.

It may also be appropriate for the Council to look back at absence in general cases if this has been ongoing issue, but the provider has failed to notify the EEF Finance Team or the Council has discovered attendance issues via other methods (i.e. audit). Such cases could mean the Council could reclaim back funding if the provider has not adhered to the conditions of the Provider Agreement 2020-2021.

It is also important to remember that Amington Heath Primary School can only claim for funded hours that the child will be in attendance for and as agreed with the parent/carer as outlined in the Provider Agreement.

Where a child is persistently absent, parents will be notified that the child's funding will be stopped and their child place will be removed.

If a child is absent, they cannot move their funding to another session within the week.

Dealing with absence from paid sessions

Parents are charged for all sessions booked regardless of attendance. Sessions are charged at £17 each. Morning sessions and afternoon sessions are charged separately.

Where a child is persistently absent, without justifiable reason, and attendance has not improved despite communication with parents, a place may be withdrawn. Parents will be notified in writing with 30 days notice.

Bank Holidays and School Closures

As a governor run nursery attached to maintained primary school, the nursery is closed for school holidays, bank holidays, INSET days and other school closures.

Children taking funded hours only are not able to move their sessions during school closures.

Paid sessions are not chargeable during school closures.

Children attending for a mixture of paid and funded sessions, will only pay for sessions over and above their weekly funded hours allocation with a standard school week (Monday to Friday).

Eg1. Child A attends Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday all day – 20 hrs. 15 hrs are funded. If school is closed on bank holiday Monday, the child will attend for 15 hrs that week. Therefore, there are no chargeable hours.

Eg 2. Child B attends full time. School is closed for INSET on the Friday. They receive 15 hrs funding. The child will have attended for 20hrs. Therefore, during this week, there are only 5 chargeable hours.

Unpaid Nursery Debts

Parents must pay in advance for any paid nursery sessions by paying money to their account on ParentPay or by sending in cash to the school office. It is important to remember that ParentPay is not a credit facility and therefore should not be treated as such. Money must be available on a child's account in order for a paid nursery session to be taken. Childcare vouchers should be ordered and confirmation of funds sent to the school office on a regular basis to avoid the child's account falling in to arrears.

Nursery sessions may be refused if a paid nursery session is not paid for in advance of the child attending nursery. If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of 1 paid nursery session. However, this debt must be paid by the following day and future sessions must be paid for in advance before any paid session is provided.

If the debt is not cleared, the school will refuse any future paid sessions until the balance is paid in full. All future sessions must be paid prior to the session being taken. Where debt remains unsettled, paid sessions for siblings will not be available.

If payment of the debt is not received in line with the attached flowchart, the Head teacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against the parents to recover the debt.

See Debt Recovery Policy

Links to Legislation

- **Families First:** [Local Support Team-getting access to family support FAQs for providers](#) on Early Education Funding and Provider Agreement
- [Complaints and Feedback](#)

Changes and Updates

Date	Page	Notes
12/9/23	3-6	Updated to including charging information and information on bank holidays/Inset days.
17/11/25	3	Added that place may be withdrawn if there is persistent non-attendance.
16/9/26	7	Added in how much sessions cost.