



St Thomas's Church Hall, 75 Monsell Road, London, 2EF N4
playgroupleader@stthomasplaygroup.co.uk
TEL. 0207 354 9347



St Thomas' Attendance and Punctuality Policy

*'Even when you're very small good attendance makes a **BIG** difference'*

Our Aim

To promote good attendance and punctuality in partnership with parents and carers in Early Years, ensuring that good habits are formed early, so that children are school ready.

The Rationale

At St Thomas Preschool we believe that;

- Regular attendance and good punctuality are important for maximising achievement and obtaining the greatest benefit from education
- Good relationships with children and their families are vital in encouraging regular attendance and punctuality
- Children settle well and want to attend settings when they feel valued and have a sense of belonging
- Good habits of attendance and punctuality are key skills for adult life

Regular early years attendance is important for all children, even babies, as it is only through regular, consistent routines that children build up the secure attachments they need for healthy development.

The Research

Research shows that regular part-time attendance from the age of 2 in a good quality early years setting has a lasting impact on children's social development and intellectual attainment throughout school.

(Research Brief RBF15-03 The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education Project: Findings from the Pre-school Period. Sylva et al, IOE, 2003).

Although education is not compulsory until the age of five, figures on attendance in reception classes are now published by the Department for Education. Ofsted take reception year attendance into account when a school is inspected. Regular attendance has a positive impact on all aspects of a young child's learning and development. A regular routine supports the young child to feel settled and secure. Unsettled children have higher stress levels which, in turn, prevent them from being able to benefit fully from the learning opportunities available.

Once children are five, their attendance in school is statutory and Islington schools all have an attendance target of at least 96%. Establishing good habits of attendance in the early years will help to ensure that all children have at least 96% attendance by the time they enter reception class.

How do we promote good attendance ?

Procedures

At St Thomas' Preschool we promote good attendance and punctuality by:

- Ensuring children attend for the expected hours.
- Requiring parents to call if they are going to be late or absent.
- Requiring parents to report sickness.
- Communicating with parents and following up on non-notification of absences as part of promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Encouraging parents of nursery age children to consider taking their children on holiday outside of term time, so that they are 'school ready' and get into good habits.
- Monitoring children's attendance.
- Consistently following up poor attendance and punctuality.

Supporting Families

We recognise that sometimes families may need extra support with attendance and punctuality, therefore good communication is essential between you and your key person. We will work with you to support your child's good attendance and punctuality. Where children's attendance is poor and not improving, we may talk to you about the available support from your local children's centre, for example, implementing bedtime routines, parenting classes.

Safeguarding

We all have a duty to keep children safe and protect them from harm and very poor attendance can be an indication of neglect and be seen as a safeguarding issue. Children with below 85% attendance are regarded in school as persistent absentees and those with attendance of less than 60% are likely to be referred to Children's Social Care for neglect.

Withdrawing a place

Clearly we will make every effort to support good attendance and punctuality, as suggested above. However, if there are no other indicators of concern or vulnerability and your child has failed to attend for 4-6 consecutive weeks or more, without a justifiable reason, we may withdraw your child's place. We will only do this once all other routes have been exhausted and the setting has provided evidence of this to and sought the approval of the Early Years Service.

The process for formally withdrawing a child's place is as follows:

- We will attempt to contact the family twice weekly to meet with them to seek a justifiable explanation (by telephone or home visit and followed up by email), including, of course, first day calling.

- We will send a recorded delivery letter during the fourth week to invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the situation and warning them of the action that will be taken after 6 weeks.
- The setting continues to attempt twice weekly contact through phone and email
- The setting sends a recorded delivery letter in the final week, explaining that the place will be withdrawn on a specific date.

Transition

If you decide to move your child to another setting then please inform us so that we can take them off of our register and send on records to the next setting to ensure smooth transition.

This policy was adopted by St Thomas' Preschool April 2023 and will be updated in April 2024