

Attendance Policy

Effective from September 2026

Setting	Hemingbrough Pre-School
Opening hours	Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 3:00pm, term time
Manager and DSL	Summer Andrews
Deputy Manager and DDSL	Jane Dodsworth
Chairperson	Gemma Howard

1 Policy statement

Hemingbrough Pre-School promotes regular attendance because it supports children's wellbeing, relationships, learning and continuity of care. Attendance information is also an important part of safeguarding. An unexplained absence, a prolonged absence or a change in a child's attendance pattern may indicate that a child or family needs help or that a child is at risk.

This policy explains what parents and carers must do when a child will be absent and the action the setting will take. It applies to every child with a booked place, including children using funded or privately paid sessions. It is shared with parents and carers when a child joins and is available on request.

2 Parent and carer responsibilities

Parents and carers must:

- tell the setting as soon as possible when their child will not attend and, wherever possible, before the session begins at 9:00am
- give the child's name, the reason for absence and the expected date of return
- contact the setting again if the absence continues beyond the date first given
- tell the setting in advance about planned absences and appointments where possible
- keep all telephone numbers, addresses and emergency contacts accurate and up to date
- tell the setting about any illness or infectious condition so the appropriate health guidance can be followed

3 Daily attendance records

The setting records each child's attendance every day, including arrival and departure times. If someone other than the expected parent or carer collects the child, staff add their name to the register notes. Staff identify children who were expected but have not arrived. The reason for every absence is recorded when known; an unexplained absence is not recorded simply as illness. Registers are completed accurately, kept available during emergencies and stored securely in line with the Record Keeping and Data Protection Policy.

4 Unexplained absence on the first day

If a child is expected and has not arrived, and the parent or carer has not contacted the setting, the following procedure begins on the first day of absence:

1. The register and messages are checked to make sure no explanation has been missed.
2. By 9:30am, a member of staff telephones the child's main parent or carer and records the time, number used and outcome.

3. If there is no response, staff try the other parent or carer and every appropriate emergency contact without unnecessary delay. A text, voicemail or email may also be used, but staff will not rely on one message alone where there is concern.
4. Information already known about the child and family is considered, including vulnerability, family circumstances, recent concerns, expected travel, siblings, attendance patterns and involvement from other professionals.
5. The Manager or DSL decides what further action is needed. This may include further contact attempts, contacting a professional already working with the family, seeking safeguarding advice, referring to Children's Social Care or requesting a police welfare check.

5 Prolonged or repeated absence

There is no single number of days that will automatically define a prolonged absence. The Manager uses professional judgement and considers the child's age, vulnerability, the parent's or carer's vulnerability, home circumstances, the reason given, the expected pattern of attendance and any previous concerns. A shorter absence may require immediate escalation where risk is higher.

For an absence that is prolonged, repeated, changing or concerning, the setting will:

- continue contact with the family and agree when the next update is required
- review patterns and trends rather than considering each absence in isolation
- discuss barriers sensitively and offer reasonable support where possible
- seek relevant information from, or share it with, other professionals when lawful and necessary
- make a safeguarding referral or request a police welfare check where professional judgement indicates this is required
- record the assessment, decisions, actions and outcome

6 Safeguarding escalation

Any concern arising from absence is managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff do not need proof before sharing a concern with the DSL. If a child may be in immediate danger, staff call 999. If the child's safety or welfare is a concern, the setting contacts North Yorkshire Children's Social Care in line with local procedures and may request a police welfare check.

Where a child has a social worker, Family Help practitioner, child protection plan, child in need plan or another agreed multi-agency arrangement, the setting follows the child's individual reporting expectations and informs the relevant professional promptly. Staff remain professionally curious and do not accept an explanation that is inconsistent, cannot be verified or does not account for the child's welfare without further consideration.

7 Supporting children and families

The setting works respectfully with families to understand barriers to attendance, which may include illness, SEND, anxiety, transport, housing, caring responsibilities or wider family difficulties. Reasonable adjustments and appropriate support will be considered. Safeguarding action will not be delayed because a family may also need support. No family will be treated unfairly because of disability, protected characteristics or personal circumstances.

8 Planned absence and illness

Parents and carers should give notice of holidays, appointments and other planned absences. As attendance at pre-school is not compulsory school attendance, the setting does not authorise or fine families for holidays. However, the absence is recorded and the setting must still act on any welfare concern. Fees, funded entitlement and notice arrangements continue to be governed by the Parent Provider Agreement and Fees Policy.

When a child is absent through illness, the setting follows its Sickness and Infection Control procedures. Parents should not send a child who is too unwell to participate or who must remain away under current health guidance.

9 Late arrival and collection

Parents should tell the setting if a child will arrive late. Staff will check any unexplained non-arrival in the same way as an absence. Children arriving late are welcomed without blame, and recurring lateness is discussed privately with the family where it affects the child or indicates a support or safeguarding need. Late collection is managed under the Late Collection Procedure and Fees Policy. A child who cannot be located during a session is managed immediately under the Missing Child Procedure.

10 Information sharing and confidentiality

Attendance information is treated as confidential and shared only for a legitimate purpose. The setting may share relevant information without consent when this is necessary to safeguard a child. Parents and carers will normally be told what is being shared unless doing so could increase risk, prejudice an investigation or conflict with advice from a statutory agency.

11 Roles and monitoring

All staff complete registers accurately, notice non-arrival and pass concerns to the Manager or DSL. The Manager ensures first-day contact is completed, safeguarding decisions are recorded and patterns are reviewed. The committee provides oversight and checks that this policy is understood and implemented. Attendance procedures form part of staff induction and safeguarding updates.

12 Review and adoption

This policy is reviewed annually and sooner following statutory or local guidance changes, a safeguarding incident, learning from an absence or a material change to setting practice.

Manager	Summer Andrews
Deputy Manager	Jane Dodsworth
Chairperson	Gemma Howard
Policy effective	September 2026
Review date	September 2027

Adopted at committee meeting: _____