**Attendance Policy**

**1. Aims**

At Just for Kidz, we are committed to promoting regular attendance as a vital part of each child’s early education experience. This policy aims to:

* Encourage good attendance habits from an early age
* Ensure children benefit from consistent routines and learning opportunities
* Enable early identification of attendance concerns or welfare issues
* Work in partnership with parents to promote and support good attendance

**2. Importance of Regular Attendance**

Regular attendance supports:

* A child’s emotional security through stable routines
* Stronger attachments with key staff and peers
* Continuity in learning and development
* Early identification of developmental needs
* Preparation for school and later life

Children who attend irregularly may miss key learning experiences and find it harder to settle, form relationships, and make progress in line with the EYFS.

**3. Parental Responsibilities**

Parents/carers are responsible for:

* Ensuring their child attends nursery regularly and punctually
* Informing the nursery by 9.00am if their child is going to be absent and giving the reason
* Keeping the nursery updated daily in the event of ongoing absence
* Providing medical evidence if requested for long or frequent absences
* Notifying the setting of planned holidays or absences in advance

**4. Nursery Responsibilities**

We will:

* Monitor children’s attendance and follow up on unexplained absences
* Record reasons for absence accurately on our system
* Contact parents/carers by phone if a child is absent without explanation
* Escalate ongoing attendance concerns through a staged approach (see below)
* Work with families in a supportive and non-judgemental manner
* Share attendance concerns with the local authority where appropriate (particularly for funded places)

**5. Illness and Medical Absences**

Children should not attend nursery if they are unwell or pose a risk of infection to others. In line with our health and safety and illness exclusion guidance, children should remain at home if they:

* Have a contagious illness (e.g. chickenpox, vomiting, diarrhoea, flu-like symptoms)
* Have a high temperature or other symptoms that prevent them from participating in activities

Parents should contact the nursery to confirm when their child can return. Guidance from Public Health England is followed on exclusion periods.

**6. Holidays and Planned Absences**

As Just for Kidz operates year-round, we understand that families may take holidays or planned absences at different times. In order to help us manage the nursery effectively, we ask that parents/carers:

* Inform the nursery in advance of any planned holidays or absences
* Let us know if their child will not be attending due to family reasons, such as a parent being off work
* Understand that holidays or planned absences during term time do not affect funding eligibility

We encourage parents to provide as much notice as possible for any extended absences, as this allows us to plan accordingly for staffing and resources.

**7. Monitoring and Follow-Up**

We monitor attendance closely and take action when necessary to support families and ensure children receive their full entitlement to early education.

**Stages of follow-up include:**

* **Stage 1:** Informal conversation with parents after patterns of absence or lateness
* **Stage 2:** Formal discussion and review if attendance falls below 85% over a half term
* **Stage 3:** Referral to the local authority or Early Help services for persistent absences (especially where safeguarding concerns arise or funded hours are affected)

**8. Funded Places and Local Authority Requirements**

For children in receipt of government funding (e.g., 15 or 30 hours), the nursery is required to report persistent absence or non-attendance to the local authority. Regular attendance is a condition of the funding agreement. Unexplained or unauthorised absences may result in the funding being withdrawn.

**9. Safeguarding and Non-Attendance**

Frequent or unexplained absence may be an early sign of safeguarding or welfare concerns. In line with our **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**, any prolonged absence (especially where contact with parents is not possible) will be treated as a safeguarding matter and escalated accordingly.

We may carry out a home visit or liaise with the appropriate agencies if we are concerned about a child’s welfare.

**10. Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Nursery Manager or sooner if there are changes in legislation or local authority guidance.