



Atherstone & Bedworth Heath Maintained Nursery Schools

Improving attendance, improving achievement

As a team we identify that positive attendance habits, formulated during time at nursery school, not only has a beneficial effect on children's attainment and progress, but also supports the transition to school and reinforces expectations of good attendance as a statutory requirement. We were also aware that a young child has no control over their attendance and we felt it crucially important they were not disadvantaged because of this.

Initially we make the expectations very clear during visits for new parents/carers, new parents/carers open evenings and also at the home visit stage – where attendance and its importance is discussed in detail.

To extend this further we formulated a non-attendance policy in February 2010 and sharpened communication with families with regard to non-attendance.

- All children on 1st day of absence are telephoned by the office staff asking for reason of absence.
- Vulnerable children are always contacted by the key person/member of the senior leadership team on the first day of absence if required.
- Within the first 2 or 3 days any unexplained absence is acted upon by the admin team with telephone calls, text messages. A home visit will be completed if no contact is made.
- After a 2 week period on unexplained non-attendance and no contact parents are written to and advised that the nursery place is at risk.
- After a further 2 week period the place is removed.
- If at any point during the period of unexplained absence we have concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, or believe they may be at risk of harm, we will seek advice from Warwickshire Children and Families Front Door.

This approach has made families value the place they have and helped to improve our attendance figures.

Furthermore, the following actions have also impacted positively:

- Free of charge places for vulnerable children for extended care to ensure a child accesses their nursery place (see terms of reference).
- Family Support Worker intervention, for example a FSW supported a nursery parent/carer with mental and physical health issues by collecting her child each morning. As the parents' health improved this offer was reduced gradually until she had established a good morning routine which enabled her to get her child to Nursery. Upon the follow up this child then had a good attendance record in school.
- Our Family Days are extremely well attended and promote the Schools as a 'community' for everybody. By breaking down the stigma some adults hold about the 'school' environment we are able to engage parents/carers at an early stage in their child's education and foster good attitudes towards education.
- Parent meetings are utilised as a further opportunity to explain the benefits of good attendance on learning.
- Key Person's play an active part in following up absence and bringing any patterns to the attention of senior leaders.
- Termly Family Matters meetings held with the School Health Visitors provide further insight and opportunities to promote positive messages.
- Our website promotes and shares aspects of the Schools work.