Minimum Attendance Policy

This Minimum Attendance Policy ("MAP") sets out the minimum expected attendance for children attending Bo Peep Nursery.

The policy supports children's wellbeing, learning and development through consistent routines and strong relationships.

Purpose of the MAP

The MAP is designed to:

- promote continuity of care and learning;
- support children's emotional security and sense of belonging;
- provide a planned and gradual increase in attendance as children develop;
- ensure children are well prepared for their next stage, including transition to school.

Why attendance patterns matter

The MAP is not an administrative rule.

It reflects what our practitioners see every day about how children settle, learn and prepare for school.

There are four reasons it exists:

(1) The key person relationship.

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires every child to have a named key person who builds a secure attachment and shapes their learning.

That relationship is built through regular, predictable contact.

A child attending sporadically, or in a pattern that changes often, has to re-establish it each time they come.

Children who attend consistently settle faster, separate more easily at drop-off, and use their key person as a secure base from which to explore.

Children who attend irregularly spend a greater proportion of each session settling rather than learning, and the effect is most pronounced in children who find transitions difficult.

(2) Access to the whole curriculum.

Our day is not uniform, and different parts of it do different work.

Adult-led teaching, specialist sessions, outdoor learning and extended child-initiated play are spread across the whole day, and the balance changes through the week.

Mealtimes are a curriculum in their own right: serving, pouring, using cutlery, conversation, tidying away.

A child attending part of the day sees part of what we plan. Which part varies; a shorter day always means less of it.

(3) Time for sustained thinking.

The most valuable learning in early years happens in extended, uninterrupted episodes where a child works through a problem and an adult joins them in it.

This takes time to reach.

A child who arrives, settles and leaves within three hours rarely gets past the settling.

Longer attendance is not simply more of the same.

It changes what is possible: a construction project that runs across a whole day, a cooking activity from ingredients to eating, a role-play that develops rather than restarts.

(4) Readiness for school.

School asks a great deal of a child at once: a longer day away from home, eating independently in a large hall, managing their own belongings, and sustaining attention in a much bigger group with far fewer adults.

Building attendance gradually across the year develops that stamina and independence while a familiar key person is still close by.

It is the single most effective thing we do to make the transition to school straightforward.

How progression works in practice

Your child's key person will discuss each step with you towards the end of the preceding term, and will explain in specific terms what your child will gain — which sessions, which activities, which routines they will access that they currently do not.

Progression is the expectation and it is contractual.

Where a family prefers their child to remain at their current level, that is accommodated as a bespoke arrangement at the bespoke rate.

Nothing changes without a conversation first.

Terms

For the purposes of this policy the Nursery's year runs from September to August and is divided into three terms: Autumn from 1 September, Spring from 1 January and Summer from 1 May.

MAP progression takes effect on the first day of each term.

How the MAP Works

Children follow an age-appropriate attendance pathway which increases across the academic year (September to August).

MAP progression is automatic and is not reset by a child's birthday.

Progression follows a single pathway of attendance levels — 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 hours a week, and then full time — advancing by one level at the start of each term.

A child continues from the level they have reached.

Moving into a new age group changes the rate that applies, not the position on the pathway.

Two-Year-Old MAP

- Autumn term: Five mornings
- Spring term: Five mornings and one afternoon
- Summer term: Five mornings and two afternoons
- Full-time: Monday to Friday, 8.00am–6.00pm

Three-Year-Old MAP

- Autumn term: Two full days and three mornings
- Spring term: Three full days and two mornings
- Summer term: Four full days and one morning
- Full-time: Monday to Friday, 8.00am–6.00pm

Four-Year-Old Attendance

The expected pattern for children preparing for school is full-time attendance, to support consistency, confidence and readiness for transition.

Where full-time attendance is not possible, a bespoke arrangement may be agreed under the section below.

Children Under Two

Places for children under two are offered by exception and at the Nursery's discretion, where we can meet the child's needs within our staffing ratios.

Attendance patterns for children under two are agreed individually and are not covered by the MAP pathways above.

A child moves onto the two-year-old pathway from the start of the term following their second birthday.

Full-Time Attendance

Full-time attendance represents the highest level of consistency and is the Nursery's priority provision.

Most families choose full-time care as their child progresses.

Bespoke Attendance

In limited circumstances, the Nursery may agree to a bespoke attendance pattern.

Any bespoke arrangement is time-limited and is reviewed at the next MAP progression point.

Where a bespoke pattern falls below the applicable MAP minimum, a bespoke rate applies.

A bespoke arrangement does not replace the MAP as the minimum contractual attendance.

Bespoke arrangements are reviewed before each progression date.

At each review, families are encouraged to move onto the MAP pathway.

Where a bespoke pattern is above the applicable MAP minimum, it may continue until the next review.

Progression and Notice

Progression is contractual.

Attendance steps up at the start of each term along the pathway set out above.

The pathway is explained at enrolment and confirmed to families each September, and each individual step is confirmed in writing before it takes effect.

Your child's key person will discuss the step with you beforehand.

That conversation is about how to make it work well for your child — which sessions, and what settling support may help — rather than whether it happens.

Where a family and the Nursery agree that a child should remain at their current attendance level for a further term, that becomes a bespoke arrangement.

Because the pattern then falls below the applicable MAP minimum, the bespoke rate applies for as long as it continues, and it is reviewed before each progression date.

Reduction in Attendance

Attendance below the applicable MAP minimum constitutes a reduction in contracted attendance and requires prior written approval from the Nursery and not less than four (4) full months' written notice.

Fees

Fees are published as a monthly amount for each attendance pattern.

Higher levels of attendance attract a lower hourly rate.

Fees are annualised and charged on a calendar month basis across the year, including periods of closure.

MAP progression increases the hours attended and will therefore increase fees during the year.

Bespoke patterns below the applicable MAP minimum are charged at the bespoke rate shown in the published fee table.

Published fee tables are available on request and on the Nursery's website.

Government Funded Hours

Where a child is eligible for a government funded early education entitlement, the funded hours are provided free of charge at the point of delivery.

The value of the funded hours is credited against the child's account at the hourly rate applicable to that child's attendance pattern.

No charge is made to parents for funded hours, and no element of a parent's fee is calculated by reference to the funded hours or to the funding rate paid by the local authority.

Parents are charged only for hours attended in excess of the funded entitlement.

Funded hours are stretched across the Nursery's 51-week year so that entitlement is available consistently, including outside term time.

A 15-hour weekly entitlement is delivered as 11.18 hours per week, averaging 47.5 hours per calendar month.

A 30-hour entitlement is delivered as 22.35 hours per week, averaging 95 hours per calendar month.

Where the Nursery's published hourly rate exceeds the rate paid by the local authority, the Nursery absorbs the difference.

Access to the funded entitlement is not conditional on the purchase of additional hours or services.

Meals and consumables during funded hours are charged at an hourly rate set out in the published fee table.

A funded entitlement is a proportion of a child's total hours rather than a particular part of the day, so the charge is that same proportion of the daily cost.

These charges are optional: families may provide these items themselves, and the funded place is unaffected either way.

A family wishing to opt out should tell the Nursery before the start of the preceding term; our packed lunch policy sets out what we are able to accept.

Eligibility codes for extended entitlements must be reconfirmed by parents in line with HMRC requirements.

Where a code lapses or is withdrawn, funded hours cease from the date of withdrawal and those hours revert to the published rate.