



Attendance and Absence Policy

We take steps to ensure that children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and they do not miss their entitlements and opportunities. At the very least, good attendance promotes good outcomes for children. In a small minority of cases, good attendance may also lead to early identification of more serious concerns for a child or family.

Children's absences are monitored closely and if we do not have an explanation of an absence when your child is expected, it is your responsibility to contact us either by telephone, in writing via email or text/Whatsapp within one hour of the time they would have been expected, to advise us of their absence.

If no contact is received from you, or if your child is absent for a prolonged period of time our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), will take immediate action to contact you to seek an explanation for the absence and be assured that your child is safe and well. We will attempt to contact you, or alternative emergency contacts throughout the day.

If there is a continued lack of contact made with the parents/carers and there is no means to verify the reason for the child's absence i.e. through a named contact on the child's registration form, this is recorded as an unexplained absence on the child's personal file and is followed up by the manager each day until contact is made.

Our DSL also adheres to Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from the provision. If contact has not been made, and we have any reason for concern about a child's wellbeing we will implement our settings safeguarding procedures immediately and welfare, children's services will be contacted for advice about making a referral. Other relevant services may be contacted as per LSP procedures.

- All absences are recorded on the child's personal file with the reason given for the absence, the expected duration and any follow up action taken or required with timescales.
- Absence records will be monitored to identify patterns and trends in children's attendance. An understanding of the child's and family's individual circumstances will inform the setting's judgement in determining what constitutes a 'prolonged period of absence'.
- Absence records are retained for at least three years, or until the next Ofsted inspection following a cohort of children moving on to school.

If at any time further information becomes known that gives cause for concern, we shall implement our settings safeguarding procedures immediately.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- Our DSL will attempt to contact the parents/carers to establish why the child is absent. If contact is made and a valid reason given, the information is recorded in the child's file.
- Any relevant professionals involved with the child are informed, e.g. social worker/family support worker.
- If contact is made and the DSL is concerned that the child is at risk, the relevant professionals will be contacted immediately. The events, conversation and follow-up actions are recorded. If contact cannot be made, the DSL will contact the relevant professionals and informs them of the situation.
- If the child has current involvement with social care, the social worker will be notified on the day of the unexplained absence.

- If at any time information becomes known that gives cause for concern, we will implement our settings safeguarding procedures immediately.

Safeguarding

- If a child misses three consecutive sessions and it has not been possible to make contact, the DSL will call Social Care and make a referral if advised. Contact with Social Care may be made sooner if there are concerns for a child's wellbeing or welfare
- If there is any cause for concern i.e. the child has a child protection plan in place or there have been previous safeguarding and welfare concerns, the DSL will attempt to contact the child's parent/carer immediately. If no contact is made, the child's absence is logged on the *Safeguarding incident reporting form*, and Social Care are contacted immediately, and safeguarding procedures are followed.

Poor/irregular attendance

Whilst attendance at an early years setting is not mandatory, regular poor attendance may be indicative of safeguarding and welfare concerns that should be followed up.

- In the first instance the Pre-school headteacher will discuss a child's attendance with their parents/carers to ascertain any potential barriers i.e. transport, working patterns etc and should work with the parents/carers to offer support where possible.
- If poor attendance continues and strategies to support are not having an impact, the Pre-school headteacher will review the situation and decide if a referral to a multi-agency team is appropriate.
- Where there are already safeguarding and welfare concerns about a child or a child protection plan is in place, poor/irregular attendance at the setting is reported to the Social Care worker without delay.

In the case of funded children, the local authority may use their discretion, where absence is recurring or for extended periods, considering the reason for the absence and impact on the setting. The Pre-school headteacher is aware of the local authority policy on reclaiming refunds when a child is absent from a setting.