



Attendance and Absence Policy

Policy Statement

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.

There are several reasons why a child may be absent from a setting. In most cases it is reasonable to expect that parents/carers alert the pre-school as soon as possible, or in the case of appointments and holidays give adequate notice.

We consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and personal circumstances and use our professional judgment when deciding if a child's absence should be considered as prolonged. We give consideration to the child's vulnerability, the parent's/ carer's vulnerability and their home life.

We are alert to signs that children who do not attend regularly or stop attending our setting might be at risk of abuse or neglect. We are prepared to take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected.

This 'Attendance and Absence Policy' is shared with parents and carers, and they are advised that they should contact the setting within one hour of the time the child would have been expected to advise of their absence.

Designated safeguarding leads must also adhere to Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from pre-school.

Procedures

- If a child who normally attends fails to arrive and no contact has been received from their parents/carers, or if the child is absent for a prolonged period of time, the designated safeguarding lead takes action to contact them to seek an explanation for the absence and be assured that the child is safe and well.
- If no contact is made with the parents/carers and the reason for the child's absence cannot be verified by emergency contacts on the child's registration form, this is recorded as an unexplained absence on our register and child's records and is followed up by the manager until contact is made.



Attendance and Absence Policy (continued)

- If contact has not been made, and we have any reason for concern about a child's wellbeing and welfare, children's services will be contacted for advice about making a referral. Other relevant services may be contacted as per LSP procedures and a police welfare check may be requested.
- 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 also 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.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Children

- The designated safeguarding lead or key person attempts 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 designated safeguarding lead is concerned that the child is at risk, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately. The events, conversation and follow-up actions are recorded. If contact cannot be made, the designated person contacts the relevant professionals and informs them of the situation.
- If the child has current involvement with social care, the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
- If at any time information becomes known that gives cause for concern, 06 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults procedures are followed immediately.



Attendance and Absence Policy (continued)

Safeguarding

- If a child misses consecutive sessions for a prolonged period of time and it has not been possible to make contact, the designated safeguarding lead calls Social Care and makes 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 designated safeguarding lead attempts to contact the child's parent/carer immediately. If no contact is made, the child's absence is recorded as a safeguarding concern, and Social Care are contacted immediately, and safeguarding procedures are followed.

Poor or 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 manager should 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 manager must 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 manager is aware of the local authority policy on reclaiming refunds when a child is absent from a setting.