

Child Protection

Absence



We take steps to ensure that children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and they do not miss out on 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 setting as soon as possible, or in the case of appointments and holidays give adequate notice. The 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 persons must also adhere to Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from childcare.

- Parents or carers are required to notify the setting by phone or email on the first day of absence. For a prolonged period of absence, parents or carers are requested to keep the setting regularly updated.
Should we not be notified of an absence, we will attempt to contact the parents or carers.
- We reserve the right to contact Children's Services if we have any concerns about a child's absence. This is at the discretion of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- All absences are recorded 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 comes to light that gives cause for concern, safeguarding procedures will be followed immediately.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- The designated person or key person attempts to contact the parents 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 a child misses three consecutive sessions and it has not been possible to make contact, the designated person calls Social Care and makes a referral if advised. Contact with Social Care is at the discretion of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and may be made sooner if there are concerns for a child's wellbeing or welfare
- If contact is made and the designated person 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, and we have any reason for concern about a child's wellbeing and welfare, the designated safeguarding lead will contact Children's services for advice about making a referral. Other relevant professionals may be contacted as per Local Safeguarding Procedures.
- 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 comes to light that gives cause for concern, Safeguarding children and child protection procedures will be 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 setting manager should discuss a child's attendance with their parents to ascertain any potential barriers i.e., transport, working patterns etc and should work with the parent/s to offer support where possible.
- If poor attendance continues and strategies to support are not having an impact, the setting 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 regarding payment of their funding. Where absence is recurring or for extended periods they will consider the reason for the absence and impact on the setting. The setting manager is aware of the local authority policy on reclaiming funds when a child is absent from a setting.

Authorisation & Review

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Wroughton Preschool

Held on

Date to be reviewed

Yearly at AGM

Signed on behalf of the management
committee

Name of signatory

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)

Chairperson

