



## 1.9 Attendance and absence

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 setting as soon as possible, or in the case of appointments and holidays give adequate notice. The attendance and absence policy are 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, setting contact numbers are (01795) 536803 or 07542 108030 . Designated safeguarding leads must also adhere to Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from the provision

- 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 immediate action to contact them to seek an explanation for the absence and be assured that the child is safe and well.
- Attempts to contact the child's parents/carers continue throughout the day on the first day of absence, if no contact has been made by the end of the day, the setting will contact other emergency contacts on the registration form.
- If no contact is made with the parents/carers and there is no means to verify the reason for the child's absence i.e. through a emergency 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.
- 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 our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- All absences are recorded on the child's non-attendance record with the reason given for the absence, duration, attempts to contact parents/carers 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 will follow our safeguarding or child protection policies and procedures immediately to report concerns.

## **Safeguarding vulnerable children**

- The designated safeguarding lead, senior management 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 on the child's individual non-attendance record.
- 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 absence, information shared if parent contacted the setting, reason for absence and any concerns.
- If at any time information becomes known that gives cause for concern, Safeguarding procedures are followed immediately.

## **Safeguarding**

- If a child misses three consecutive sessions and it has not been possible to make contact, the designated person contacts Social Care requesting advice on next steps and possible referral. 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 person attempts to contact the child's parent/carer immediately. If no contact is made, the child's absence is logged on Safeguarding green form, and Social Care are contacted via the Front door service, a referral is made 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 setting 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 setting manager must review the situation and decide if a referral to a multi-agency team is appropriate. (Integrated Review at 2 years with Health Visiting team, sign posting to Family Hubs)
- 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 and attendance percentages, reasons for absence are reported at safeguarding meetings.

- If children are in receipt of SENIF (Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding) children's percentages are for each term are reported to the SENIF team, if children's attendance falls below 95% regardless of reason a decision may be made to cease SENIF for individual children.

### **Funded Children**

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 setting manager is aware of the local authority policy on reclaiming refunds when a child is absent from a setting. If the local authority reclaims funding or refuses to pay funding for the following term due to reoccurring absence parents/carers are liable to pay for any short fall in funding.

If your child is regularly not attending booked sessions, we reserve the right to reduce the number of booked sessions in the following funding period to ensure that funding is not reclaimed by local authority and also to ensure that children waiting for sessions can access them.

This Policy was adopted by	St Mary's Playgroup CIO	(name of provider)
At committee meeting on	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	(date)
Date to be reviewed	October 2026	(date)

Signed on behalf of the provider



Name of signatory: Paul David Found

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) Committee Trustee (Chairman)