9. Childcare Practice Procedures

9.2 Attendance

We take steps to ensure that children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and that 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 to alert the setting as soon as possible, or in the case of appointments and holidays give adequate notice. Parents are advised that they should contact the setting within one hour of the time the child would have been expected to arrive to advise of their absence. Designated Leads must also adhere to Hertfordshire Safeguarding Partners (HSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from childcare as well as the EYFS statutory requirements (2026)

Fees for missed sessions are still applicable and replacement/alternate sessions are not offered unless in exceptional circumstances and that decision is solely at the Manager's discretion.

Procedure

- If we have not been informed of an absence, we will attempt to telephone the primary carers by 9.30am or 12.30pm. If they are uncontactable or have not returned our call, the child's emergency contacts will be contacted.
- Details of all lateness/non-attendance is recorded on the 'Non Attendance' log kept in the register.
- We make this Attendance Policy available to all parents/carers.
- Key Persons monitor the attendance and punctuality of their key children and ensure a reason is obtained every time a child is absent from Preschool.
- Key persons are to inform the Manager if they have concerns about a child's attendance or punctuality.
- We ensure that registers are accurately completed with reasons for absences i.e. holiday, sickness.
- We provide positive messages to parents/carers about the importance of punctuality and good attendance.

- The manager will 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 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.
- We cannot claim government funding for any sessions booked and routinely not attended. In these circumstances the session will need to be privately funded or cancelled.

If at any time further information comes to light that gives cause for concern, the Designated Lead will complete a Safeguarding Incident Report and refer if necessary.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- The designated lead 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 contact is made and the designated 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 lead 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.