

## 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 15 minutes 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 the provision

- If a child is absent without an explanation a text then a telephone call will be made to the parents to establish the reason for the absence. If no contact is made, then the following process will be followed.
- 1) A telephone call to parent's carers work or training provider will be made.
- 2) An email to parents will be sent.
- 3) Calls to other emergency contacts, including other family members listed as emergency contacts, will be made to try to establish why the child is absent.
- 4) Calls to the siblings' schools, nurseries or childminders will be made to establish if they or the sibling can confirm the child's whereabouts.
- If contact cannot be made by telephone call a home visit may be carried out and a contact post card will be posted through your door.
- If following this no contact is made, and there is cause for concern that the child whereabouts remain unknown, the health visiting service, your child's GP and Children and Families services will be contacted to ascertain if family support may be needed. In more urgent cases, the Police may be contacted to carry out safe and well checks
- 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.

## 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, the Safeguarding children policy is followed immediately.

### **Safeguarding**

- 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 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 06.1b 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 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.
- 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 setting manager is aware of the local authority policy on reclaiming refunds when a child is absent from a setting.