

Attendance and Child Missing from Childcare Policy

Purpose of this Policy

Good habits of attendance and punctuality are key skills for life. We will monitor attendance for Early Education Funded children on a weekly basis to ensure that children receive a beneficial level of early education to assist them in progressing in their development, and follow the procedure below for any cases of non-attendance or erratic attendance.

The purpose of this policy is to support the wellbeing of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Grass Roots Private Day Nursery, especially in keeping them safe and supporting their learning and development. Even for very young children there are positive benefits to be gained from regular attendance. This includes not only coming to every session but also being there on time.

Arrivals and Departures

It is the policy of the nursery to give a warm welcome to each child on their arrival. The front door will be secured by keypad at all times. Access will be gained to the nursery by operating the video link and a member of staff will normally be available to open the door to parents and children. Any specific information provided by the parent/carer(s) should be recorded. If the parent requests the child to be given medicine during the day the staff member must ensure that a medicine form is completed on Family, acknowledged by parents and the medication procedure is followed. **see Medication Policy.*

All children have contracted hours of attendance, if parent/carer(s) require extra hours then we request that these are booked at least one week in advance, where possible (subject to availability). These can be requested through the Family app or by ringing the office. Please discuss with the nursery management team if you need to change your contracted hours.

The nursery will only release your child from our care to adults who have permission to collect them. We will, therefore, need you to provide us with a list of people authorised to collect. It would be helpful, if they are not known to us, to add them to your child's contacts with a photo on the Family app. In the event of an emergency, we can operate a password system where you can send someone not authorised to collect your child but who is able to give the password. They would also need photographic ID.

It is important that you have arrived by the contracted time to collect your child. Even very young children learn our routine and know when their parents/carer(s) are due. They can become distressed if you are late. We know sometimes delays are unavoidable, especially if you are relying on public transport. If you are delayed, for whatever reason please contact the nursery as soon as you realise you will be late and let us know when you expect to arrive. We will reassure your child that you are on the way and if necessary organise additional activities. In the instance of a child not being collected from the nursery after a reasonable amount of time has been allowed for lateness, our late/non-collection procedure will be initiated by staff. The nursery reserves the right to make an additional charge for late collection. **see Late/Non collection Policy.*

Non Attendance

It is the parents' or carer's responsibility to contact the nursery on the first day their child is absent. When a child is unwell, we ask that parents contact the nursery before the start of the session on the first day of absence informing us of the reason for absence. Parents can report absences via the Family app or phone.

As part of our Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures, the nursery will endeavour to contact the parent/carer or other emergency contacts by phone or message, if no contact has been received regarding the reason for the absence, to check on the safety of the child. *See Appendix - First Day Calling Procedure*

If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not return to nursery for the next 48 hours after the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the nursery. Children who have been prescribed a certain medication for the first time, will need to stay off nursery for 48 hours from the first dose of the medication to ensure no adverse reaction. **see Medication Policy.*

Recording and Monitoring Attendance

Knowing when children have attended nursery provides vital information to keep children safe from harm and help tackle underachievement. Having clearly accessible attendance records helps identify children at risk and helps multi-agency teams to understand, assess and support the widest possible range of needs for a child and their whole family.

To ensure that attendance records support the work of safeguarding young children and promote their learning and development, it is important for the manager and staff to pay attention to the following:

- Keep full registration details for every child
- Keep accurate information about parents/carers and emergency contacts as well as who does/does not have a legal right of access to each child.
- Make clear and accurate register entries, children are signed in on entrance to the building and out when they exit.
- Consistently and thoroughly investigate all absences for individual children and their siblings and keep good records of the family's explanations, making consistent use of the appropriate absence options where applicable.
- Routine monitoring of attendance by the management team

Promoting and Supporting Good Attendance

In the nursery there are a wide range of elements that combine to support and encourage good attendance. These include:

- having a positive and welcoming atmosphere;
- being sensitive to and supportive of families from a range of cultures and backgrounds;
- building good relationships between children, families, staff and management team;
- being rigorous in monitoring attendance and in identifying and analysing patterns of absence and the number of sessions missed;
- being rigorous and persistent in seeking and recording explanations for absence;
- being aware of additional factors in the setting's relationship with the family (e.g., EAL, learning difficulties) and making sure that appropriate means of communication are used at all times;
- making sure that all staff know what to do and who to tell, if a child is absent/late or a child has a changeable or deteriorating pattern of absence or lateness
- signposting families that are struggling with attendance and lateness.

Taking Action

The child's Key Person should discuss any concerns with the management team. It is particularly important to know when the issue of this child's attendance first became a concern and whether there is any pattern to the absences, this will be recorded on the child's chronology.

The management team will:

- make every effort to discuss the matter with the family and take steps to encourage and support improved attendance;
- keep notes of any actions to help the family and a date by when attendance will be reviewed on the child's chronology
- maintain brief, up-to-date, records of contacts or attempted contacts with the family and the date when each action was taken.
- contact the local school for information regarding siblings and attendance, where applicable. Knowing whether poor attendance is an issue for the whole family or just one child can help to decide how to support the family.
- If no improvement in attendance is seen and concerns still remain, contact with the Health Visitor will be made
- If concerns still remain, contact will be made with MAST (Multi-Agency Screening Team): **01422 393336** (in normal working hours) as part of the Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures

Monitoring Children's Absences (as per our agreement with Calderdale)

Our Early Years' setting works with children and parents to help children progress towards achieving a good level of development.

We therefore monitor attendance for Early Education Funded children on a weekly basis to ensure impact of this funding on the progress of these pupils, in accordance with the local Early Education Funding Provider Agreement which, in turn, complies with the Early education and childcare statutory guidance (April 2024). As soon as it becomes evident that a child is failing to attend all their requested sessions we will follow the procedure below:

Erratic/non-attendance for 2 weeks

An informal discussion with the child's parent/carer to see if there any problem preventing full attendance

Erratic attendance for a further 2 weeks (4 weeks total)

Parents/carers are requested to attend a meeting to discuss the impact on the child's progress and the implications for the continued availability of the place. A reduction in funded sessions may be a possible solution. This meeting is formally recorded. The Provider Portal will be updated to reduce the funded hours where appropriate.

Non-attendance for a further 2 weeks (4 weeks total)

If no contact or resolution can be established with the parent/carer we will take this period in lieu of 4 weeks' notice period. This will be formally recorded and the Provider Portal will be updated to confirm the leaving date of the child.

Erratic attendance above 4 weeks

We will give due consideration to the circumstances of our children and their families where there is a need for additional support, for example for SEND children, transient families, vulnerable pupils or children with no status. All causes of absence will be fully investigated before any funded place is withdrawn. If a funded place is still made available to a child with an erratic pattern of attendance, we will work with the family to bring about substantial improvement. Records of all communications and outcomes will be maintained for audit purposes.

Exclusion

There are however certain occasions when it may be necessary to ask a parent to not bring their child to nursery for a short period of time. These reasons include:

- If a child is ill, for example, if a child has a highly infectious condition e.g. impetigo, Hand, foot and mouth and chicken pox * *see Sickness and illness policy*
- If the child has a notifiable disease
- If a child has had a bout of sickness or diarrhoea within the last 48 hours.
- If a child is on antibiotics that they haven't taken before (48hrs in case of an allergic reaction)
**see medication policy*

The management of the nursery reserves the right to terminate a contract with immediate effect and exclude a child permanently if they:

- continually demonstrates unregulated behaviour that means we are unable to keep other children in the setting safe
- are demonstrating unwanted behaviours and that the family are not engaging with nursery to address
- are likely to cause harm to other children in the setting

Nursery staff will already have discussed their concerns with the parent/carer and worked with them over a period of time to address the child's behaviour. Nursery staff would have used a variety of different strategies and, with parental permission, sought support from outside agencies. Exclusion of a child would only occur if their behaviour was very severe and was having a continued negative impact on the other children in the nursery.

Self Evaluation

Having clear policies and procedures for promoting, supporting, recording and monitoring the attendance of children in the EYFS will provide useful evidence for future planning.

Stay safe. Noting and exploring attendance issues could lead to the identification of family circumstances in which children were potentially at risk.

Be healthy. Noting and exploring attendance issues could lead to the identification of concerns in other areas of wellbeing (sleep, nutrition, cleanliness, emotional development etc.).

Make a positive contribution. By attending consistently children are more able to feel part of a group and receive positive feedback for their participation

Enjoying and achieving and Economic Well Being (developing skills for the future). Taking positive action to encourage parents to make sure that their children enjoy good attendance and come to their setting on time may lead to improved attendance and give children a better chance of benefiting from the opportunities to learn and develop.

This policy will be reviewed by management annually, who are responsible for ensuring the dissemination of this policy to all staff, volunteers and parents.

Appendix

Grass Roots First-Day Calling Procedure

1. Registers completed appropriately – including accurate times of arrival and departure
2. Late children are checked against registers
3. Answer machine is listened to and Family is checked
4. If a child isn't in setting, we will attempt to contact main carers
5. If there is no response wherever possible someone from outside of the family home will be contacted
6. Alert the provision manager and DSL that this child is absent and no contact has been made
7. Contact siblings schools or any other agencies involved to ascertain whether they have had any information which may be helpful, or know the whereabouts of the child or family, and contact MAST to see if there has been any incident that they are aware of
8. If management have serious concerns about the child/families welfare, a home visit should be made if possible and appropriate by the provider or another agency involved
9. A risk assessment should then be completed:
 - a. **No apparent risk:** There is no apparent risk of danger to either the child or the parent. This may be appropriate for children who you have reason to believe are absent from the provision but not at harm due to previous patterns of behaviour or information from other people e.g. a child who often goes on holiday at this time of year and parents always fail to inform you. You should continue to make enquiries but it would not be proportionate to contact police at this stage.
 - b. **Low or medium risk:** The risk of harm to the child is assessed as a possible but minimal risk **OR** the risk of harm to child is assessed as likely but not serious. This may be relevant for those children where there are no additional vulnerabilities, however, you have minimal contact information and making parental contact is always difficult.
 - c. **High risk:** The risk of serious harm to the child is assessed as very likely. This would be relevant for children already considered vulnerable. This may be due to risk of neglect or physical, emotional or sexual abuse. You should also consider child sexual exploitation and Prevent, in addition to protected characteristics; mental health, forced marriage, honour based violence, trafficking, and female genital mutilation. This may also be relevant for those children where the absence and lack of ability to make parental contact is highly unusual.
10. If this is assessed as 'No Apparent Risk' as a provider you can make the decision to continue to make enquiries and not contact the police if you do not feel that this is necessary or proportionate. These cases should not be ignored and must be monitored over time and consideration given to escalation if there is a change to the circumstances that has increased the level of risk.
11. If assessed as 'Low or Medium Risk' – contact the Police on 101 and complete the referral checklist (please also see Key Information on last page of this procedure)
12. If assessed as 'High Risk' and there is a need for an immediate response then contact the Police on 999
13. Provider's enquiries continue and any further information shared with Police
14. Use chronologies to record your concerns, actions and decisions