Attendance Policy

At Town Street Playgroup, we believe good attendance is essential if children are to be settled and take full advantage of the learning and development opportunities available to them. Regular attendance at playgroup can set good practice for statutory attendance at school. In a small minority of cases, good attendance may also lead to early identification of more serious concerns for a child or family

All parents must inform us by telephone or by text message on the first day of absence. If a child is absent for a second day without notification, we will contact the family by telephone to find out the reason for the absence.

Notice of planned absence due to medical appointments or holidays should be informed by email.

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, will take 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 or other named carers continue throughout the day on the first day of absence.

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 named contact on the child’s registration form, this will be recorded as an unexplained absence on the child’s personal file and be followed up 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 per LSP procedures.

All absences will be 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.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

The designated safeguarding lead will attempt 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 will be 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 will be contacted immediately. The events, conversation and follow-up actions are recorded. If contact cannot be made, the designated person will contact the relevant professionals and inform them of the situation.

If the child has current involvement with social care, the social worker will be notified on the day of the unexplained absence.

If at any time information becomes known that gives cause for concern, the procedures in the Safeguarding Children policy will be followed.

Safeguarding

If a child misses three consecutive sessions and it has not been possible to make contact, the designated person will call 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 will attempt to contact the child’s parent/carer immediately. If no contact is made, the child’s absence will be recorded on a Safeguarding incident reporting form, and Social Care will be contacted immediately, and safeguarding procedures 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 will 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 will 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 will be reported to the Social Care worker without delay.

If children go missing with no reasons for absence, or are missing from the setting on repeated occasions, or are known to Children’s Social Care, we will share our concerns with the Duty and Advice Team at Children’s Social Care.

An attendance register is kept and will record reasons for absence.

September 2025