Child Attendance and Absence Policy

Aim

We believe that we have a responsibility to follow up on unknown or unexpected absences to ensure that the child and family are safe and well, which forms part of our safeguarding commitment, and this is detailed in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

After School Club

Staff complete a register at the beginning of each session. If we have not been informed of their absence in advance, we will

- Talk to their class teacher at pick up (3.20pm) (Infants Only)

- Ring parents, then emergency contacts and junior school office if no answer from parents (from 3.30pm) (Juniors)

Holiday Club

As a holiday playscheme we are aware that we may be the only setting seeing a child whilst school is closed; this makes our role in following up absences particularly important e.g. during the six-week summer holiday period, as we may be the only organisation that will know if the child and family are safe and well, or act if we have concerns. We will ensure we have the contact information for the schools that children attend, so that support from their safeguarding lead can be sought if needed.

Reasons for Absence

We acknowledge that there are a number of reasons why children might not attend our setting when they are expected e.g. illness, holidays, religious/cultural observance. As part of our agreement with parents/carers, they have been advised that they need to inform us of any instances when a child might not be attending. We have a procedure in place and parents/carers are asked to follow this (see below and the parent/carer agreement)

Where there are instances of a child being absent and no reason has been provided in advance by the parent/carer, this would be deemed to be an unknown or unexpected absence and as stated in our policy aim, we will follow up on this absence to ensure the child and their family are safe and well.

Record Keeping

We are required to maintain a register of attendance for our setting and these will be reviewed for patterns and to support increased attendance where needed.
All registers will be held securely in line with our Retention of Records Policy and processes and will be kept in accordance with our Retention of Records Policy.

We will hold contact details for the child's parents/carers and will seek to have at least 2 other emergency contacts for any registered family. Where these cannot be provided, we will work with the parents/carers to identify who could act as an emergency contact.

All contact details will be updated on at least an annual basis through our registration forms and we request in our parent/carer agreement that we are informed of any changes to these as soon as possible.

Collaboration and Support

Responsibility for monitoring absence is the Manager. They will work to ensure our attendance policies and our absence support are in place and will work with the DSL where appropriate to support families.

Monitoring of absence records will take place regularly and the Manager will contact parents/carers regarding absence either in writing or in person, as appropriate.

We believe in the importance of building positive relationships with parents/carers and working together to support attendance. Part of discussions we might have may focus on whether the family might need some extra support and this may include a referral to other agencies in partnership with the parent/carer (e.g. social worker, Family Help, health visitor etc.).

As a setting we will also do all we can to support parents/carers with attendance issues as we believe that regular attendance is crucial for a child's development, including access to the curriculum, building relationships and developing positive self-esteem.

Parents/Carers Procedure for Absence

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to contact the setting either by telephone, text, email or in writing if their child is unable to attend on a nominated day. This notification must be on the first day of absence and on any following days within an hour of the child's usual start time at the setting.

If the absence will be for a specific period of time e.g. for a holiday or religious celebration that might be more than one day, the parent/carer can inform the setting in advance and the setting will record this on the register as an absence.

If the child fails to return to the setting after the specified period, we will follow the procedure for unknown or unexpected absences.

Staff Procedure for Unknown or Unexpected Absence

Staff complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. If parents/carers have not explained the reason for absence within an hour of the child's usual

start time, then staff will inform the Manager for following up on absences for the setting. The Manager will then phone the parents/carers of the child.

If the Manager is unable to get hold of the parent/carers, the Manager will call the emergency contact/s for the child. The Manager will then decide on the best course of action based on their knowledge of the family and child, any known vulnerabilities and any information they receive from the emergency contacts.

If there is no satisfactory explanation for the absence, the Manager enters this as an unknown absence on the setting records.

If the Manager is unable to contact the parents/carers within 24/48 hours and there is no satisfactory explanation for the absence from emergency contacts, the Manager will contact Family Help/First Response for advice, the family's social worker (if they have one) and may also contact the police to request a welfare check. If it is known that the family is experiencing challenges or if the child has SEND the setting may act more swiftly than the 24/48 hours detailed above.

Records will be kept of contact and attempted contact with parents/carers and/or emergency contacts and other agencies.