

1.4 Attendance and Absence Policy

Policy Statement

At The Children's Workshop, we are committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and consistent development of every child. Regular attendance is vital for children to fully benefit from the experiences we offer. This policy outlines the expectations and procedures surrounding attendance at the Preschool, and how child absence is managed. The Preschool Manager is the Designated Safeguarding Lead ("DSL") and will lead on safeguarding concerns but if unavailable, the Deputy DSL will take responsibility and brief the DSL on return.

Expectations of Parents and Preschool

Parent Responsibilities

- Must notify the preschool of your child's absence by 9:30am on the first day and each day following.
- Use telephone, email, or the Family app to report absence.
- Work in partnership with the preschool to address any barriers to regular attendance.
- Attend meetings arranged to discuss ongoing or frequent absences.

Preschool Responsibilities

- Complete registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.
- Follow up on unexplained absences by contacting the parent after 9.30am.
- Mark absences as unauthorised if no explanation is provided.
- Report persistent or concerning absences to the Preschool Manager.
- The Preschool Manager will take appropriate action and may contact Children's Services if necessary.

Procedures for Attendance and Reporting Absence

Daily Registration

- Registration will be completed at the start of each session as children arrive at the entrance. Children's attendance or non-attendance will be recorded along with any lateness.
- Late arrivals disrupt the children in the room and causes your child to miss out on valuable activities such as settling and circle time. Please ensure your child arrives promptly for the start of their session.

Non-attendance

If a child is absent and we have been informed of their reason for absence this will be recorded as a note on their profile. If a child is absent without an explanation the following procedures are followed:

- If a child fails to arrive by 9.30am and no communication has been received from their parents/carers, the Preschool Manager or Office Manager will contact the parents/carers to seek an explanation for the absence and be assured that the child is safe and well.
- If after numerous attempts, contact has not been made with the child's parent/carers, we will contact the secondary emergency contacts provided. All attempts to communicate with all parties and outcomes will be recorded on the child's profile.
- The Preschool will continue to attempt to make contact for 48 hours, using all available forms of communication (telephone, email and the Family app).
- If communication has not been made within 48 hours, children's services will be contacted for advice about making a referral. Other relevant services may be contacted as per Kent Safeguarding Children Multi Agency Procedures ("KSCMP").
- All absences are recorded on the child's profile with the reason given for the absence, the expected duration and any follow up action taken or required with timescales.
- Absence records are retained for at least three years, or until the next Ofsted inspection following a cohort of children moving on to school.

If at any time further information becomes known that gives cause for concern, the Preschool's Child Protection Policy relating to responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns is immediately followed.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- The DSL 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 profile.
- For children who are known to Kent Integrated Children's Services and/or have a social worker, the relevant parties are informed.
- If contact is made and the DSL is concerned that the child is at risk, Kent Integrated Children's Services, and/or the social worker are contacted immediately or the police if imminent risk. The events, conversation and follow-up actions are recorded.
- If contact cannot be made, the DSL contacts Kent Integrated Children's Services and/or the social worker and informs them of the situation.
- If at any time information becomes known that gives cause for concern, the Preschool's Child Protection Policy is followed immediately.

Poor/irregular attendance

Whilst attendance at preschool is not mandatory, regular poor attendance may be indicative of safeguarding and welfare concerns that should be followed up.

- In the first instance the DSL 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 DSL must review the situation and decide if a referral 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 Kent Integrated Children's Services and/or the social worker without delay.

Funding

In the case of funded children, Kent County Council ("**KCC**") may use their discretion, where absence is recurring or for extended periods, considering the reason for the absence and impact on the preschool to revoke the child's funding. The DSL is aware of the KCC's policy on reclaiming refunds when a child is repeatedly absent from preschool.