



Barn Close Pre-School

9.02 Attendance and absence

At Barn Close Pre-School, we understand that good attendance is crucial for positive outcomes, but we also recognise that there are times and valid reasons for children to be absent. The attendance and absence policy is shared with parents and carers, and they are advised to contact the setting if their child is absent. However, if a child who usually attends pre-school is absent without contact from their parents or carers, or if the absence is prolonged, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Amy Gepp and Sam Fisher, will reach out to ensure the child's safety and seek an explanation. This follows the timeline below:

- **9.30 am** Attempts to contact the child's parents/carers (text or phone call). If no contact is made, then..
- **10.30** Attempts will be made to contact the two emergency contacts provided on the registration form
- These steps will continue throughout the first day of absence or until contact is made.
- If no contact is made and there is no means to verify the reason for the child's absence, this is recorded as an unexplained absence in the child's personal file and is followed up by the Manager/ Deputy Manager each day until contact is made.
- After 24 hours, if no contact has been made, a Welfare Check may be requested by calling 101.
- A home visit may also be conducted. This will depend on staffing availability.
- If we have concerns about a child's wellbeing and are unable to make contact, the DSL will seek advice from children's services and other relevant agencies. Any new information that raises concerns will lead us to follow the reporting procedures for safeguarding or child protection.
- All non-contact absences are recorded in the child's file along with the reason for the absence, the duration and any follow-up action taken or required.

- Absence records and registers 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 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 but the DSL is concerned that the child is at risk, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately.
- If the child is currently involved with social care, the social worker is notified on the **first day** of the unexplained absence.
- If at any time information becomes known that gives cause for concern, Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults procedures are followed immediately.

Safeguarding

- If a child misses three consecutive sessions and it has not been possible to make contact, staff will ask for a welfare check by calling 101, may make a home visit depending on ratios or call Social Services. Home visits and contact with Social Services will 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 DSL attempts to contact the child's parent/carer at **9.30 am**. If no contact is made, the child's absence is logged, and Social Care are contacted immediately, and safeguarding procedures are followed.

Poor/irregular attendance

- While attendance at an early years setting isn't mandatory, frequent poor attendance may signal safeguarding and welfare concerns that need attention.
- The setting manager, Amy Gepp, will discuss a child's attendance with their parents/carers to ascertain any potential barriers. For example, transport, working patterns, etc., and will work with the parents/carers to offer support where possible.
- If attendance issues persist and supportive strategies fail, the setting manager will then re-evaluate the situation.
- Funded Places may be at risk if poor/ irregular attendance cannot be resolved
- 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 Services without delay.