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UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL - PRESCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS

Attendance Policy

At the URC preschool and nursery, we take steps to ensure that all the children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and they do not miss their entitlements and opportunities. At the very least, good attendance promotes good outcomes for children. In a small minority of cases, good attendance may also lead to early identification of more serious concerns for a child or family.

There are several reasons why a child may be absent from a setting. In most cases it is reasonable to expect that parents/carers alert the setting as soon as possible or at the latest by 10am, or in the case of appointments and holidays give adequate notice. The Designated Safeguarding Leads will adhere to Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from the provision:

- 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 Leads, 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 on their registration form 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 is recorded as an unexplained absence on the register and is followed up by 2 members of staff conducting a home visit at the end of the day.
- If contact has still not been made after conducting a home visit we will follow up daily until contact is made and if 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 are recorded on the register with the reason given for the absence.
- If at any time the Designated Safeguarding Leads see a pattern to a child's absences, then an absence record will be created. This form will include the date, the reason for the absence, 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, 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 procedure 'Responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns' is immediately followed'

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- The Designated Safeguarding Leads, or key person 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 on the register.
- Any relevant professionals involved with the child are informed, e.g. social worker/family support worker.
- If contact is made and the Designated Safeguarding Leads are concerned that the child is at risk, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately. The events, conversation and follow-up actions are recorded. If contact cannot be made, the Designated Leads will contact the relevant professionals and inform them of the situation.
- If the child has current involvement with social care, the social worker is notified on the 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 by calling all contacts on their registration form or conducting a home visit the Designated Safeguarding Leads will call Social Care and make 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 Safeguarding Leads will attempt to contact the child's parent/carer immediately. If no contact is made, the child's absence is logged on a Safeguarding incident reporting form, and Social Care are contacted immediately, and safeguarding procedures are 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 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 setting manager must 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 is reported to the Social Care worker without delay.

In the case of funded children, the local authority may use their discretion, where absence is recurring or for extended periods, considering the reason for the absence and impact on the setting. The setting manager is aware of the local authority policy on reclaiming refunds when a child is absent from a setting.

Last Reviewed: October 25