

CHILD ABSENCE AND REPORTING

Policy

If a child is unable to attend Pre-School for any reason for a booked session/ day we ask that an explanation for their absence is provided prior to the start of their booked session. Absence should be reported by telephone (01626 334834), email (stjosephspreschoolunit@gmail.com) or through Tapestry messenger.

Statement

If an explanation for the absence is not received within 1 hour of the start time of their booked session/ day we will attempt to contact the child's parents/ main carer. If we fail to make contact on the first day of absence this will be recorded on the child's register, further attempts to make contact will then be made again the following day. If contact is still not made with the child's parents/ main carer an attempt will be made to contact other emergency contacts provided on the child's registration form, if this is not successful, the Manager can contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to report our concerns for unexplained absence. All contact attempts, actions taken, and any information shared will be done in accordance with GDPR and will be recorded on the child's register file.

In a small minority of cases, poor attendance may also lead to early identification of more serious concerns for a child or family.

This policy and associated procedures apply to all staff, agency staff, apprentices, students and volunteers, working in St Joseph's Pre-School Unit. Throughout the policy we use the term staff to refer to all these groups unless stated otherwise.

This policy applies to children, young people, and vulnerable adults as defined as:

- A child is anyone aged 0-18.
- A young person is defined as aged 16 to 19 and may work in the settings as a student or volunteer or be a parent / carer of a child.
- A vulnerable adult is defined as a person aged 18 years or over, who is in receipt of or may need community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation (Care Act 2014). In early years this may be parent / carer of a child, or a volunteer.

AIMS

Child safety is our priority and to keep children safe in education.

At St Joseph's Pre-School we provide;

- Clear procedures for staff to follow in relation to absences.
- Transparent information for parents/ main carers in relation to absences.

Expectations

- Regular and punctual attendance is essential in ensuring that children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late regularly.
- Children should be at Pre-School, on time, every day that they are booked to attend, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.
- If a child is reluctant to attend pre-school for any reason communication between the child's parent/ main carer is encouraged.
- Parents/main carers are requested to report holidays in advance with at least one weeks' notice.
- It is the parents/ main carers responsibility to contact the Pre-school Unit either by telephone, email or through the Tapestry messenger whenever the child is absent. This must be on the first day of the absence prior to the start of their booked session or day, and then subsequently daily until the child returns.
- In the case of medical appointments parents/ main carers are expected to provide at least one weeks' notice and evidence may be requested. Where possible we request that these appointments are made for outside of the child's normal booked sessions.

Procedures in the event of child absence

- A member of staff will complete the register at the beginning of each session/day.
- Where a parent/ main carer has not explained a child's absence within 1 hour of the start of their normal booked session, the parent/ main carer will be contacted by telephone on the number provided by the parent on the child's registration form.
- If contact is made and an explanation is offered this will be recorded on the child's register file.
- If contact is not established a note of the attempt will be added to the child's register file, and the Manager, Deputy and DSL will be made aware.
- If the child then attends for their next planned session the parent/ main carer will be reminded of their responsibility for reporting absences, and an explanation will be requested and recorded on the child's register file.

- If a child continues to be absent on their next booked session without an explanation the Deputy Manager will attempt to contact the child's parent/main carer to establish an explanation. Records of this attempt and any explanations offered will then be added to the child's register file. The Manager or Deputy will then remind the parent/main carer of their responsibility for reporting absence.
- If contact is not established during the booked session/ day, with either the parent/main carer or other emergency contacts provided by the child's parents the Manager or Deputy will raise the concern with the DSL who might report the non-attendance to the (MASH).
- The Manager or Deputy will take appropriate action when absence is a concern and will discuss attendance issues with the parent/ main carer.
- All contact attempts, explanations offered for absences and discussions with parents/main carers in relation to absences will be recorded on the child's register.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- The DSL or key person will attempt to contact the parents to establish why the child is absent. If contact is made and a valid reason given, the information is recorded.
- Any relevant professionals involved with the child will be informed of the child's attendance levels and absent reasons and these are clearly recorded and presented for meetings e.g. social worker/family support worker.
- If contact is made and the designated person is 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 DSL will attempt to contact other named contacts recorded for the child, and if this is not then successful contact with the relevant professionals to inform them of the situation will be made.
- 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 comes to light that gives cause for concern, then safeguarding procedures are followed immediately.

Poor/irregular attendance

Whilst attendance at St Joseph's Pre-School is not mandatory, regular poor attendance may be indicative of safeguarding and welfare concerns that will be followed up. In the first instance the Manager or Deputy will discuss a child's attendance with their parent/s/carers to ascertain any potential barriers i.e. transport, working patterns etc and should work with the parent/s to offer support where possible.

- If poor attendance continues and strategies to support are not having an impact, the DSL will review the situation and decide if a referral to a MASH is appropriate
- Where there are already safeguarding and welfare concerns about a child or a CPP is in place, poor/irregular attendance at St Joseph's Pre-School Unit will be reported to the Social Care worker without delay.

- If a child misses three consecutive sessions/days and it has not been possible to make contact, the DSL will contact the 'Front Door' and make a referral to MASH if advised.

Persistent absences (15% or more)

The Manager will request with a child's parents/ main carers to discuss persistent absences, and a plan to improve attendance will be developed.

Where the child's parents/ carers don't engage with the plan and persistent absences continue to raise concern a referral to (MASH) will be made.