09 Early years practice procedures

**09.2 Absence**

We take steps to ensure that children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and they they do not miss out on 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 or in the case of appointments and holidays give adequate notice.

* Parents are advised that they should contact the setting to advise of their absence. If a child who normally attends fails to arrive and no contact has been received from their parents within 3 working days, the key person/manager, takes action to contact them to seek an explanation for the absence and be assured that the child is safe and well.
* If contact has not been made within 5 days, children’s services will be contacted for advice about making a referral. Other relevant services maybe contacted as per LSP procedures.
* All absences are recorded on the Daily Booklet form.
* 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 comes to light that gives cause for concern, procedure 06.1 Responding to safeguarding or child protection concernsis immediately followed.

**Safeguarding**

* 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 person attempts to contact the child’s parent/carer immediately. If no contact is made, the child’s absence is logged on 06.1a Safeguarding incident/concern 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 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 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, taking into account 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**.**