The Stacey Pre-School
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14 Attendance and Absence Policy

1 Purpose And Principles

The Stacey Pre-School is committed to safeguarding children, supporting their learning and wellbeing, and working constructively with families to encourage regular attendance at their agreed sessions.

Although pre-school attendance is not compulsory school attendance, an unexpected or repeated absence can indicate that a child or family needs support or that there may be a safeguarding concern.

We maintain accurate attendance records, respond promptly to unexplained or prolonged absences, identify concerning patterns, and share this policy with parents and carers.

We will consider each family's circumstances sensitively, including illness, disability, SEND, bereavement, family difficulties and cultural needs.

This policy should be read with our Safeguarding, Health, Record Keeping, Admissions and Childcare Agreement documents.

2 Responsibilities

Parents and carers:

- notify the pre-school as soon as possible when a child will be absent,
- give the reason and expected return date,
- keep contact and emergency-contact details up to date,
- and inform us if a longer absence is planned.

Key Person and practitioners:

- complete accurate registers,
- report any unexpected absence or emerging pattern to the Manager or DSL, and
- record relevant information factually.

Pre-School Manager and DSL:

- lead follow-up of unexplained or prolonged absences,
- assess safeguarding risk,
- decide escalation,
- monitor patterns and maintain confidential records of actions and outcomes.

Pre-School Coordinator supports:

- secure records,
- communication with families,
- agreed funding administration and policy review,

without delaying any safeguarding action led by the DSL.

Trustee Committee and Chair:

- seek assurance about policy operation through anonymised reporting and
- ensure sufficient time and resources are available for follow-up.

3 Daily registration and collection

- A staff member records each child's arrival and departure on each booked session, using the actual times via Tapestry Register App.
    - The attendance register identifies the child and the appropriate session;
    - their Key Person is recorded within the setting's records.
- Staff promptly identify a child who has not arrived for an expected session and distinguish known notified absence from unexplained absence.
- Any child missing from the setting after being registered as present, or missing during a session or outing, is managed immediately under the setting's missing-child safeguarding and emergency procedures, not the routine absence process.
- Registers and follow-up notes are stored securely and retained in accordance with the Record Keeping Policy and applicable requirements.

4 Reporting an absence

Parents should contact the pre-school before the beginning of the child's booked session wherever possible, giving the child's name, reason for absence and expected return.

Notification can be made using the contact arrangements published in the Prospectus or otherwise agreed with the setting. e.g.

- Call or leave a voicemail or text message on the Pre-school's mobile [Mob: 07592 222318] parents are reminded that the Pre-School team are only available during term time, Monday – Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm
- Email the Pre-School using: thestaceypreschool@gmail.com

Parents should update us if the absence continues longer than expected.

Where an absence is related to infection or illness, the pre-school follows its Health Policy and any relevant public-health advice. Parents should not be asked to provide unnecessary sensitive medical information.

5 Unexplained absence and safeguarding response

An absence is unexplained where the child is expected but no satisfactory notification or explanation has been received.

These response times are this setting's proposed operational standard; the DSL may take action sooner whenever risk warrants it.

When	Action	Who
On the expected session day	• Check the register for any planned absence records and recent communications. • Contact the parent/carer promptly, preferably during the session, to establish the child's welfare, reason for absence and expected return.	Practitioner / Manager
If the parent cannot be reached	• Try a second contact method or an authorised alternative contact as advised by parent in the Childcare Agreement and, where appropriate, any named emergency contacts. • Record dates, times, methods, replies and any relevant concerns.	Manager / DSL
Any sign of risk or continuing lack of contact	• DSL reviews known vulnerabilities, previous patterns and available information. • Seek advice or refer to children's social care in line with local safeguarding procedures. • Request a police welfare check where an immediate risk requires it; • call 999 in an emergency. Do not wait for a fixed number of days.	DSL
Next booked session or prolonged absence	• Repeat proportionate contact attempts and review the safeguarding assessment until welfare is established or the matter has been appropriately escalated. • Discuss supportive return arrangements.	Manager / DSL

Staff must never assume that silence means a child is safe.

Any staff member who has an immediate safeguarding concern must inform the DSL straight away and follow the Safeguarding Policy; if a child is in immediate danger, contact emergency services.

6 Repeated absence, lateness and family support

The Manager reviews attendance patterns regularly and considers repeated unexplained absences, marked reductions in attendance, persistent lateness or failure to return following an agreed break.

There is no automatic percentage threshold that determines a safeguarding referral.

Decisions are based on the child's individual circumstances and any other concerns.

- Speak with parents sensitively to understand barriers and agree practical support where possible.
- Involve the Key Person and SENCO when appropriate, and consider reasonable adjustments for children with SEND or disabilities.
- Agree any actions and a review date; record whether attendance, contact and the child's wellbeing improve.
- Escalate emerging welfare concerns promptly under safeguarding procedures, involving partner agencies where appropriate.

7 Funding, places and withdrawal

The setting's Prospectus and Childcare Agreement explains parent notification requirements, booked sessions, fee arrangements and notice periods.

Attendance and absence records may also be required for funded-place administration and local authority checks.

The Coordinator will apply the current Portsmouth City Council provider agreement and funding rules, checking any absence-related claim or withdrawal decision with the authority where necessary.

A safeguarding concern must not be delayed because of funding or fee considerations.

An absence alone will not automatically be treated as a request to withdraw a child's place. Before any proposed withdrawal or funding change, the Manager and Coordinator will consider the contract, funding rules, safeguarding information, and communication with parents.

The DSL will ensure that an unresolved child-welfare concern is escalated appropriately.

8 Confidentiality, monitoring and governance

Attendance information and safeguarding notes are personal data. Access is restricted to those who need it for their role, and information is shared lawfully and proportionately for safeguarding purposes.

The Manager monitors records and trends and includes an anonymised summary of material attendance issues and actions in reports to the Trustee Committee. Individual child details are shared with trustees only where necessary and appropriate.

The Manager and Coordinator will review how the procedure has worked after any significant concern and at least annually; trustees approve substantive changes.

All staff receive this policy during induction and updates as required.

A copy is made available to parents on the website and via Tapestry or on request.

9 Related documents and authoritative guidance

Internal: Safeguarding Policy; Record Keeping Policy; Health Policy; Admissions Policy for Funded Early Years Education; Prospectus / New Parent Pack and Childcare Agreement.

External: EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective September 2026, www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2; DfE Summary of EYFS safeguarding requirements, help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/safeguarding/summary-of-the-eyfs-safeguarding-requirements.