Beechoak Farm Montessori Pre-school

Promoting health, safety and hygiene

3.4 Absence

We take steps to ensure that children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and 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 alert the setting as soon as possible, or in the case of appointments and holidays give adequate notice. Parents are advised that they should contact the setting within one hour of the time the child would have been expected to advise of their absence. Designated persons must also adhere to Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from the provision.

We consider patterns and trends in a child's absence and their personal circumstances and use our personal judgement when deciding if the absence should be considered prolonged. Consideration will be given to the child's vulnerability, parent's and/ or carer's vulnerability and their home life. Any concerns will be referred to our local children's social care services and/ or a police welfare check requested.

- If a child who normally attends fails to arrive and no contact has been received from their parents, the manager, takes 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 or other named carers continue throughout the day on the first day of absence.
- If no contact is made with the parents 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 child's personal file and is followed up by the manager each day until contact is made.
- If contact has not been made within three working days, children's services will be contacted for advice about making a referral. Other relevant services maybe contacted as per safeguarding procedures.
- All absences are recorded with the reason given for the absence, the expected duration and any follow up action taken or required with timescales.

- If at any time further information comes to light that gives cause for concern, our safeguarding procedure is immediately followed.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- The manager or DSL attempts to contact the parents 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 and the manager/ DSL 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 designated person contacts the relevant professionals and informs 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 further information comes to light that gives cause for concern, our safeguarding procedure is immediately followed.

Safeguarding

- If a child misses three consecutive sessions and it has not been possible to make contact, the DSL calls Social Care and makes a referral if advised.
- If there is any cause for concern i.e. the child has a CPP in place or there have been previous safeguarding and welfare concerns, the DSL attempts to contact the child's parent/carer immediately. If no contact is made the child's absence is logged as a safeguarding concern 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 manager/ DSL will 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.

This policy was adopted by staff at Beechoak Farm Montessori preschool.

Held on 11th March 2026

Date to be reviewed December 2026

Signed on behalf of Beechoak Farm Montessori by

Charlotte Crosby & Hayley Majeika

Proprietor Manager