



## Absence and Attendance Policy

*Even when you're very small, good attendance makes a BIG difference ...*

### Policy Statement

At Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school, we recognise the importance of regular attendance for children's development, safety, and emotional well-being. This Absence and Attendance Policy outlines our procedures for recording attendance and following up on any unexplained or prolonged absences, ensuring that children are safeguarded and fully supported while in our care.

### Recording Attendance

- Accurate daily attendance records are maintained for all children on our online Tapestry register, noting arrival and departure times.
- Registers are completed immediately upon a child's arrival and departure to ensure real-time safeguarding.
- Digital records are stored securely and are available for inspection by Ofsted or the local authority.

### Parent and Guardian Responsibilities

- Parents or legal guardians must inform us as soon as possible if their child is going to be absent from the setting for any reason (e.g. illness, holiday, family emergency).
- Parents are advised that they should contact the setting by 9:30am on the day of absence to advise of their absence, this can be done via email ([acornwelwyn@gmail.com](mailto:acornwelwyn@gmail.com)) or telephone (01438 840132). The absence is then recorded on our Tapestry register.

### Monitoring and Following Up on Absences (EYFS 2025 Update)

- In line with EYFS 2025, we have established a clear procedure for identifying and following up on prolonged or unexplained absences to ensure the child's safety and welfare.
- If a child is absent without notification, we will take the following steps:

#### Failure to report an absence

In the event of a child failing to arrive for their allocated session without an explanation being provided by their parent or carer within 30 minutes of their expected start time, the following steps will be taken.

#### Where there are no current safeguarding concerns

- Step 1 – Within an hour of the child's expected arrival time on day 1 and day 2 of the absence, a member of staff will attempt to contact the primary parents/carers via telephone.
- Step 2 - Where the contact is unsuccessful, we will contact the remaining designated emergency contacts to seek confirmation of the child and adults' safety.
- Step 3 – By day 3 where contact is again unsuccessful or an explanation unable to be provided two members of staff will carry out a home visit (staff ratios permitting)

- Step 4 – Following an unsuccessful home visit where contact has not been obtained the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will make a referral to the Local Children's Social Care Services and/or the police (using the non-emergency police contact number 101) to carry out a welfare check.

#### **Where there are current safeguarding concerns**

- Step 1 - Within an hour of the child's expected arrival time on day 1 of the absence, a member of staff will attempt to contact the primary parents/carers via telephone.
- Step 2 - Where the contact is unsuccessful, we will contact the remaining designated emergency contacts to seek confirmation of the child and adults' safety.
- Step 3 – Where contact is again unsuccessful or an explanation unable to be provided two members of staff will carry out a home visit on the same day (staff ratios permitting)
- Step 4 – Following an unsuccessful home visit where contact has not been obtained the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Designated Safeguarding Deputy will make a referral to the Local Children's Social Care Services and/or the police (using the non-emergency police contact number 101) to carry out a welfare check.

These steps ensure we are proactively safeguarding children's welfare and engaging with families when support may be needed.

#### **Emergency Contact Details (EYFS 2025 Requirement)**

- We maintain a minimum of three up-to-date emergency contacts per child to ensure effective communication in cases of unexplained absence or emergency.
- Parents are asked via our termly newsletter to review and update their emergency contact details at least termly, or immediately if changes occur.

#### **Prolonged or Repeated Absences**

- In cases of regular non-attendance or repeated absences, we will:
  - Discuss concerns with parents to understand any underlying reasons
  - Offer support or signpost to services if there are barriers to regular attendance
  - Monitor patterns that may raise safeguarding concerns and report accordingly

#### **Holidays and Planned Absences**

- Parents are encouraged to inform us in writing of any planned absences (e.g. holidays, appointments) in advance.
- These are recorded on our Tapestry register.

#### **Term-Time Only and Funded Hours Considerations**

- For children accessing **government-funded hours**, we are required to monitor attendance to ensure funding is used appropriately.
- Frequent or extended absences without valid reason may be reported to Hertfordshire's Funding Team and could impact ongoing eligibility for funding.
- We are required to advise Hertfordshire County council where a child is absent for more than 20 days, regardless of whether the absence has been notified to us.
- The local authority may use their discretion to reclaim funding, where absence is recurring or for extended periods, considering the reason for the absence and impact on the setting.

Hertfordshire early education and childcare entitlement handbook  
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/information-for-childcare-providers/providers/documents/hertfordshire-early-education-and-childcare-entitlement-handbook-april-2025.pdf>

### **Continued poor/irregular attendance**

Whilst attendance at an early year's 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 DSL will discuss a child's attendance with their parents to ascertain any potential barriers i.e. transport, working patterns etc and will work with the parent/s to offer support where possible.
- If poor attendance continues and strategies to support are not having an impact, the designated person must review the situation and decide if a referral to the Local Children's Social Care Services and/or the Police for a welfare check.
- 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.

***There will be no fee reductions or reimbursements for any emergency or pre-planned child absenteeism.***

**This policy was adopted by Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school on 01 September 2025**