

Sticky Fingers aspires to provide a safe, fun and welcoming environment for everyone. We offer children experiences to support their development, empowering them to reach their full potential



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09 Early years practice procedures

09.02 Absence

We take steps to ensure that children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and that 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 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 ask that parents confirm planned holidays by email where possible with as much notice as possible.
- If a child who normally attends fails to arrive and no contact has been received from their parents, the setting 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 contacts 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 setting each day until contact is made.
- If we are still unable to make contact and have not been informed of the child's absence then we may need to make a home visit to check that you are all safe and well.
- We will continue to check in with the parents throughout the child's absence and follow absence procedures if no contact can be made to ensure that the family are safe and well.

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- All absences are recorded on the child's personal attendance record and online CPOMS file with the reason given for the absence, the expected duration, the actual duration, the method of communication, any additional notes and any follow up action taken or required with timescales.
- Paper copies of the child's 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 we have concerns regarding the welfare of the child, we will follow the procedures in our **06 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults policy booklet**.

THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP DAYS FOR ABSENCES which are not caused by the setting.

- The preschool reserves the right to give the place to another child after 2 weeks, without notifying the child's parents. A letter to parents will be sent as a record that this has taken place.
- If a child is receiving the free nursery place, all attendance may be checked by the local authority and parents may be charged for absences if they are unauthorised or deemed to be an unacceptable reason for absence.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- The setting 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 absence file and their online CPOMS record.
- If contact is made and the designated safeguarding lead 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 safeguarding lead 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.

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- If at any time information comes to light that gives cause for concern, procedures in our **06 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults policy booklet** are followed immediately.

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 settings lead practitioner 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 settings lead practitioner 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.