



CHARMINSTER PRESCHOOL

Chapter 09 – Early Years Practice Procedures

09.2 Attendance and absence

This policy was adopted by	Charminster Pre-school
Date	February 2025 Reviewed 18th February 2026
Signed on behalf of Charminster Pre-school	
Name of signatory	Alex Greening
Role of signatory	Chairperson
Reviewed date	February 2027

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We take steps to ensure that children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and they do not miss 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.

Aims

- To ensure all unexplained or unexpected absences are followed up to keep children / young people and their families safe
- To ensure accurate attendance records are maintained
- To ensure each child receives a full high-quality education

Scope of the Policy

This policy and associated procedures apply to all staff, agency staff, apprentices, students and volunteers, working in Charminster Preschool. Throughout the policy we use the term staff to refer to all these groups unless stated otherwise.

This policy applies to children, young people, and vulnerable adults as defined here:

- A child is anyone aged 0-18.
- A young person is defined as aged 16 to 19 and may work in the settings as a student or volunteer or be a parent / carer of a child.
- A vulnerable adult is defined as a person aged 18 years or over, who is in receipt of or may need community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to



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protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation (Care Act 2014). In early years this may be parent / carer of a child, or a volunteer.

At Charminster Preschool we share information about our expectations for absence reporting through discussions when families begin using the service.

How Charminster Preschool support children who are absent

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.

The attendance and absence policy are shared with parents and carers, and they are advised that they should contact Charminster Preschool within one hour of the time the child would have been expected at preschool, to advise of illness or reason for their absence. Designated safeguarding lead must also adhere to Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from the provision.

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- If a child who normally attends fails to arrive and no contact has been received from their parents/carers, the designated safeguarding lead, 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/carers or other named carers continue throughout the day on the first day of absence.
- If no contact is made with the parents/carers 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 register and child's personal file and is followed up by the Preschool Leader or their Deputy each day until contact is made. A note is also made on the safeguarding chronology of an unexplained absence



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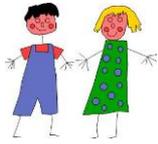
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- If contact has not been made within 3 working days, children’s services will be contacted for advice about making a referral. Other relevant services may be contacted as per LSP procedures.
- All absences are recorded on the child’s personal file with the reason given for the absence, the expected duration and any follow up action taken or required with timescales.
- Absence records will be monitored to identify patterns and trends in children’s attendance. An understanding of the child’s and family’s individual circumstances will inform the setting’s judgement in determining what constitutes a ‘prolonged period of absence’.
- 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 becomes known that gives cause for concern, procedure 06.1 Responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns is immediately followed.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- The designated safeguarding lead or key person attempts to contact the parents/carers 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 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.
- If at any time information becomes known that gives cause for concern, 06 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults procedures are followed immediately.



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Safeguarding

- If a child misses three consecutive sessions and it has not been possible to make contact, the designated person calls Social Care and makes a referral if advised. Contact with Social Care may be made sooner if there are concerns for a child's wellbeing or welfare.
- 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 06.1b Safeguarding incident reporting form, and Social Care are contacted immediately, and safeguarding procedures are followed.

Poor/irregular attendance

Whilst attendance at Charminster Preschool 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 Preschool Leader should discuss a child's attendance with their parents/carers to ascertain any potential barriers i.e. transport, working patterns etc and should work with the parents/carers to offer support where possible.
- If poor attendance continues and strategies to support are not having an impact, the Preschool Leader 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, considering the reason for the absence and impact on the setting. The Administrator and the Preschool Leader is aware of the local authority policy on reclaiming refunds when a child is absent from a setting.