

Non-Attendance

Category: Early Years

Risk Management and Legal Implications

Failure to manage risk may impact on the delivery of Service objectives and the outcomes achieved by Service users. Education and Children’s Services aim to mitigate the implications by ongoing management and review of risk in all elements of work activity.

The production of this document is one way in which we aim to reduce our exposure to risk. By providing staff with information on good practice, making reference to other guidance that is available across the Council and providing clarity on how we should do things, we can ensure that the management of risk is intrinsic to what we do.

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Guidance for Non-Attendance at Nursery

“Research has shown that high quality early years provision promotes children’s development and learning and, in the longer term, enhances their educational and life chances (Sylva, 2014).”

(Realising the Ambition – Being Me)

“It is about responding in a meaningful, supportive way, working with parents wherever possible. It takes into account that everyone involved with the family has an important part to play and puts the wellbeing of children and families at the heart of the support. It puts children’s rights and well-being of children with services that support them such as ELC settings, schools and the NHS.”

(Realising the Ambition – Being Me)

In our setting we adopt Fife Council’s guidance and procedures for non-attendance at nursery.

Although attendance at nursery is not compulsory, it is in the best interests of the child to have a regular pattern of attendance. There may be occasions, however, when attendance becomes irregular or may stop altogether. This may be due to difficulties in the family or because the child is finding separating from a parent difficult or for other reasons that nursery staff should be aware of.

We will always take every possible step to discuss the situation with parents, carers or other agencies and to encourage and offer support to the family on returning to nursery.

The child's place on the nursery roll should only be reviewed once such avenues have been explored. No child will be removed from the nursery roll without serious consideration of the implications for the child.

There may be situations where nonattendance is unexplained or where the nursery is unable to contact a family and, in these circumstances, the following procedures will be followed.

When there are concerns about the safety of a child then the school’s CP Procedures should be followed, which may include taking guidance from the SW Contact Centre. This will be particularly pertinent for children on the CP register or where a child has attendance at nursery recorded as part of agreed inter-agency panning processes.

- Parents/carers should notify the nursery as early as possible on the 1st day of a child's absence and should indicate, if possible, the expected length of absence. Parents should be informed when enrolling their child of the importance of this procedure and be given information such as the telephone number and name of person to contact in



the nursery. They should be made aware that Absence Management Procedures will be implemented on the first day of absence.

- If the parent/carer does not inform the nursery on the first day of a child's absence, then nursery staff should attempt to contact the parents by telephone and risk assess the situation. They should inform the relevant agencies and a senior member of nursery staff if they have a concern. In some cases, a home visit may be necessary at this stage. It may also be appropriate to contact emergency contacts to try and get in touch with the family. All attempts to contact the parent/carer will be recorded. Risk Assessments should be carried out in all cases of non-contact prior to making any decisions on how best to proceed.
- If the child has not returned to nursery after 3 days, then a further attempt to contact them will be made. At this stage if contact cannot be made by telephone/email with the parent/carer and a reason for the absence cannot be confirmed then a letter should be sent to their home. If appropriate a copy of this letter should be sent to the referring agency involved with the child.
- If a reply to this letter is not received by the 10th day of absence, then a second letter will be sent, and every attempt should be made to find out about the child and family's whereabouts.
- Should all the above attempts to contact the parent/carer fail to locate the child, on the 15th day of absence, the local authority 'Children Missing in Education Officer' should be informed. Fife Council, Children Missing in Education guidance (updated Nov 2017) can be found here [Children Missing from Education Procedures - Nov 2017.doc \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- At this stage, it may be appropriate for the nursery place to be withdrawn for this child and reallocated if necessary.
- All letters will be copied to the Health Visitor and any appropriate referral agencies, where required.
- All attempts to communicate with the parent/carer will be logged.
- It will also be our guidance to record children who are sent home due to illness or accident.