



## Dealing with Absences

### Policy

It is our aim at Dunscore Pre-School Centre to provide a safe secure environment within which the children will be able to thrive and enjoy learning. The centre also has a responsibility to the children whilst absent from the centre in protecting their welfare. As unexplained absences can be a sign of or used to hide abuse they must be recorded and followed up rigorously. The Dumfries and Galloway Child Protection Committee Children missing from Education Protocol (appendix one) forms the basis for our procedures.

### Procedures

The following procedures are used by the centre to ensure that these aims are met.

- Parents and carers are asked to give details of planned absence to the senior member of staff on duty as soon as possible. This will be recorded in the register.
- Parents/carers should notify the setting if their child is unable to attend for whatever reason, even if it is for just a session or a day. The reason for absence will be recorded in the register. However, there may be occasions when this doesn't happen.
- When a child is expected to attend and doesn't, and where no notice of absence has been received the parents/carers are contacted as early as possible, to establish that the child is safe, the reason why the child is absent and the likely period of absence. All children are brought to the centre by an adult approved of by their parents/ carers. As a result non-attendance does not need to be checked on immediately but will always be confirmed by the end of a session.
- Parents/carers will be contacted using the group's contact information. Parent/carers are made aware of the importance of keeping the setting up-to-date with contact information to facilitate ease of contact when situations such as this arise. They must be encouraged to notify the setting of any changes to their contact details, as they occur.
- If no contact could be made with the parents and the child was missing from a second session then the emergency contact details would be used. Others such as Health Visitor could also be contacted.
- If the reason for absence can not be confirmed after 5 days or sooner if there is specific reason for concern the manager or senior playleader should seek advice from the Duty Officer at Children and Families Social Work Office
- In all cases it must be confirmed what the problem is and when the child is likely to return to the centre. This will recorded in the register.
- For prolonged absences, staff will need to use their own professional judgement, based on particular situations and circumstances, as to how often to make check up calls, this will usually be on a weekly basis.
- If the manager or senior playleader is concerned about any of the information given at any point then she can ask the chair to make an informal home visit or they should refer the matter to Social Services using the procedures in the child protection policy.

- All information, advice given and action taken should be recorded and logged.

*When dealing with vulnerable children additional precautions must be taken. Vulnerable children are those with their names on the Child Protection Register or who have been on it in the last 6 months; who have recently or currently are the subject of a Child Protection Inquiry or Investigation; who are looked after at home (subject to a supervision requirement); who have been referred to the reporter; or who are looked after away from home.*

- Once contact has been made with home and the reasons for absence established and a return date established, this information should be recorded and logged and the allocated Social Worker (or their manager) notified.
- If there are any concerns over the above or if no contact with the family can be made the manager/senior playleader should discuss these immediately with the allocated Social Worker (or their manager). If they are not available the duty Social Worker should be confirmed of the problem and the child's vulnerable status.
- All information must be recorded and logged.