



Absent child Policy

January 2026- January 2027

There are many reasons why we want our children to come regularly to Acorn Childcare Centre. As well as supporting their learning and development, we want to try to make sure that children are kept safe, their wellbeing is promoted, and they do not miss out on their entitlements and opportunities. This is why attendance is included in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

- Children who attend every planned session develop a feel for the rhythm of the week and gain a sense of security from some regular elements, even when the actual pattern or focus of their learning or activity may vary widely from week to week.
- Young children find it easier to build and sustain a range of social relationships when they regularly attend their childcare setting, according to the pattern agreed with the family.
- For some families, particularly at times of stress, the child's regular attendance at school or preschool allows parents to get other things done and helps them enjoy spending time with the child when he or she is at home.

It is particularly important for us to pay close attention to the patterns of attendance, particularly those who potentially vulnerable groups of children, including, for example:

- children facing difficult family circumstances e.g., housing problems, bereavement, separation/divorce.
- Children from families experiencing some degree of financial hardship, e.g., in receipt of benefits or claiming Free School Meals (FSM).
- Children with additional needs, learning difficulties or disabilities.
- Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) or from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) families; or
- Children about whom other agencies have raised concerns, including those supported through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

Changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework means that all Early Years settings have a legal duty to follow up on all absences in a timely manner.

Practitioners will consider the following:

- Child absenteeism without notification received from parents/carers.
- Prolonged child absenteeism.
- Patterns in child absenteeism.

Consideration will be given to a child's vulnerability, parent's and/or carer's vulnerability and their home life.

Staff are responsible for completing daily attendance registers, including at after school clubs. The register must be completed accurately and promptly.

Procedure for nursery:

- If a child is absent and the family have failed to inform a member of staff the absence must then be reported to the office or senior staff member by the staff member completing the register within one hour of their normal start time. The nursery will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence using all priority contacts provided on the child's admission form. Messages will be left if there is no answer.

If there is reasonable explanation the senior/administrator should:

- Make every effort to discuss the matter with the family and take steps to encourage and support improved attendance where appropriate.
- Make note of the absence on Connect providing the explained reason provided.

If contact is not made, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and an email should be sent to priority contact one requesting explanation. SLT will attempt to contact the family again, by phone before 3pm. If no contact is made within 24 hours, concerns will be referred to the Lincolnshire Safeguarding services and/or a police welfare check will be requested.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will immediately be reported to the local authority children's social care team to ensure the child remains safeguarded.

Additional after school club procedure

If a child is absent, a member of Acorn staff will contact the respective class teacher to ascertain the whereabouts of the child after school (see missing child policy if the child cannot be located and is expected at club).

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>January 2024</i> <i>Reviewed Feb 24- LH</i> <i>Reviewed Feb 25 – SK</i> <i>Reviewed January 26 - SK</i>	<i>Lorna Hodgett</i>	<i>January 2027</i>