

6.1 Admissions

Policy statement

It is our intention to make our setting accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. We aim to ensure that all sections of our community have access to the setting through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures.

Procedures

- We ensure that the existence of our setting is widely advertised in places accessible to all sections of the community.
- We ensure that information about our setting is accessible and provided in written and spoken form.
- We will provide translated written materials where language needs of families suggest this is required, as well as access to an interpreter. Where necessary, we will try to provide information in Braille, or through British Sign Language.
- At the start of each academic year all breakfast and after school club bookings are cancelled and re-issued on a first come first served basis.
- Breakfast and after school clubs are booked through use of a booking form or on an ad-hoc basis (See Fees Policy for more information). These sessions are filled on a first come first served basis with priority given to regular bookings submitted on a booking form.
- Children can attend Upwood Small to Tall pre-school from the age of 24 months. There is a limit of 4 two year olds in any one pre-school session and a maximum of 8 pre-schoolers in the breakfast and after school clubs. There are no places for 2 year olds in the breakfast or after school clubs, although this can be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- We arrange our pre-school waiting list in birth order. In addition, our policy may take into account the following:
 - the vicinity of the home to the setting; and
 - siblings already attending the setting.
- We keep a place vacant, if this is financially viable, to accommodate an emergency admission.
- We describe our setting and its practices in terms that make it clear that it welcomes fathers and mothers, other relations and other carers, including childminders.
- We describe how our practices treat each child and their family, having regard to their needs arising from their gender, special educational needs, disabilities, social background, religion and ethnicity or from English being a newly acquired additional language.
- We describe how our practices enable children and/or parents with disabilities to take part in the life of the setting.
- We monitor the gender and ethnic background of children joining the group to ensure that our intake is representative of social diversity.

- We make our Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality Policy widely known.
- We consult with families about the opening times of the setting to ensure we accommodate a broad range of families' needs.
- We are flexible about attendance patterns to accommodate the needs of individual children and families, providing these do not disrupt the pattern of continuity in the setting that provides stability for all the children.
- For pre-school children, we require bookings to be a minimum of 2 x 2.5 hours so that we can establish and maintain secure attachments with the children in our care.

Attendance and absence

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.

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 the setting within one hour of the time the child would have been expected to advise of their absence. Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) must also adhere to Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from the provision

- If a child who normally attends fails to arrive and no contact has been received from their parents/carers, the child's key person, takes immediate action to contact them to seek an explanation as to why the child is absent. If the child is absent for a long period of time, the DSL will make contact with the parents/carers 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 child's personal file and is followed up by the manager each day until contact is made.
- If contact has not been made, and we have any reason for concern about a child's wellbeing and welfare, children's services will be contacted for advice about making a referral. Other relevant services may be contacted as per safeguarding procedures.
- All absences are recorded on the register with the reason given for the absence.
- 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, we will follow our safeguarding policy and procedures.

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 person 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, our Safeguarding policy and procedures are followed immediately.

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 a Log of Concern form, and Social Care are contacted immediately, and safeguarding procedures are followed.

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 setting manager 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 setting manager 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 setting manager is aware of the local authority policy on reclaiming refunds when a child is absent from a setting.