

General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare

Children's behaviour must be managed effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs.

Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare

1.6.1 Child attendance policy

Policy statement for St Joseph's Pre-school

There are many reasons why we want children to have regular attendance at our Pre-school. As well as supporting their learning and development, we want to try and make sure that children are kept safe, their wellbeing is promoted and they do not miss out on their entitlements and opportunities. In a small minority of cases, good attendance practice may also lead to the early identification of more serious concerns for a child or family and may have a vital part to play in keeping a child or family members safe from harm.

Although attendance at the setting is not mandatory, Ofsted inspectors will explore how well providers work with parents to promote children's attendance so that the children form good habits for future learning. In particular, inspectors will consider the attendance of children for whom the provider receives early years pupil premium¹.

However, the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework requires that St Joseph's Pre-school must follow up on absences in a timely manner. We must also consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances, using our professional judgement when deciding if the child's absence should be considered as prolonged. Consideration will be given to the child's vulnerability, parent's and/or carer's vulnerability and the child's home life. Any concerns will be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

In St Joseph's Pre-school, this policy sets out what we expect parents/carers must do in relation to their child's attendance at the setting and the procedures we followed in the event that a child is absent from the setting. Unexplainable and/or persistent absences can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including, neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation. All non-attendance is recorded. This policy applies to all parents/carers/relatives of children who attend St Joseph's Pre-school.

Procedures:

What parents/carers MUST do:

- If your child is sick or cannot attend for some reason, you must call us before 8.50am that day to let us know and explain the reason for child's absence. Alternatively, email us the evening before (email: sjpleadpractitioner@gmail.com).
- If your child will be absent from the setting due to, for example, recovering from an operation, then please let us know in advance in writing (an email will suffice) giving details of anticipated length of absence.
- If you are planning holidays during term time you must let us know in advance so we can record this in our register.

¹ Para 194 of Ofsted's Guidance: Early Years Inspection Handbook

- Collect your children on time. Sessions end at 12pm, 1pm or 3pm. Late collection of children will result in a late collection fee (see 4.10 Payment of Fees). As this could cause our ratios to be altered and, therefore, mean staff may have to stay on longer.
- Have a backup plan should your travel arrangements to drop off/collect your child go astray.
- If you or your child are experiencing difficulties with Pre-school attendance, then talk to us as a first step so we can help.

What Pre-school WILL do:

- If the parent or carer has not made contact by 9.00am then the Lead Practitioner or key worker will call parent or carer to establish why child is absent.
- If we cannot make contact with a parent/carer we will use all the contact details and the emergency contacts you have given us to try to establish why your child is absent².
- If we are concerned about the welfare of a child we reserve the right to contact social services.
- We will regularly review all children’s attendance at the Pre-school and will discuss with you any concerns we may have.
- Fees remain payable during periods of absence, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed.
- We are obliged to notify Gloucester County Council³ as soon as possible, where children in receipt of Early Years funding are absent for more than 2 weeks in a term.

Further guidance

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (latest version)
- [Early Years Foundation Stage](#) statutory framework (latest version)
- Ofsted guidance: [Early Years Inspection Handbook](#) (latest version)

Associated Policies and Procedures

- 1.2 Safeguarding children and child protection
- 4.10 Payment of Fees

Version Number	Author	Purpose of change	Date
1.0	N Pitcher	New policy: required to adhere to safeguarding requirements stipulated by Ofsted	Dec 2016
2.0	K Coupe	Reviewed, version controlled and updated	27 Feb 2019 Cttee Mtg
3.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and update reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2021) and Ofsted’s guidance	13 Oct 2021 Chair (A Hitchings)
4.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and updated in light of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2022)	26 Aug 2022 Cttee Mbr (G Ind)

² Implementing our safeguarding procedures

³ Gloucestershire Local Provider Agreement

Version Number	Author	Purpose of change	Date
5.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and updated. Reference made to Ofsted's Early Years Inspection Handbook and para 194. Hyperlinks to Further Guidance documents included.	28 Apr 2024 Cttee Mbr (J McFarling)
6.0	K Coupe	Amendment in Policy Statement to reflect wording in the 2024 version of Keeping Children Safe in Education	23 July 2024 Cttee Mbr (L Finn-Powers)
7.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and updated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change in title to "Child's Attendance Policy" from "Child non-attendance policy"; • update to reflect changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage (2025) re attendance policy and the monitoring of child absences; • inclusion of an Associated Policies and Procedures section as per s175/157 Safeguarding Audit 	30 Jan 2025 Committee Meeting