

Attendance Policy and Procedure for Absent Children

Torphins Playgroup Pre-School

This Attendance Policy is based on the “Guidelines on Managing and Promoting Pupil Attendance in Nursery, Primary and Special Schools by Aberdeenshire Council, Education and Children’s Services”.

Legislation

Article 28 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child defines that every child has the right to an education.

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Practice Model aims to ensure that every child and young person can access appropriate and timely support in order to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Recording of Attendance

Torphins Playgroup Pre-School (hereinafter referred to as ‘Playgroup’) has a responsibility to promote high levels of attendance. Playgroup must ensure that systems to monitor absence are used consistently and effectively to allow early intervention when attendance dips or there is poor attendance.

There is no legal requirement for children to attend Pre-School, however as a partner of Aberdeenshire Council, Playgroup will monitor attendance.

Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each session, to allow for early follow up of missing children.

Completing an attendance register is the responsibility of the staff.

A paper register should be completed.

Managing Absence

At times, children are absent from Playgroup for a range of reasons. Communications with parents should make it clear (e.g. parent handbook, Attendance Policy, website) that an explanation is required for each day of absence.

Parents should be reminded regularly that advance notification of any absence is preferred (such as appointments, holidays etc), although it is understood that this is not always possible.

Should a child have to leave Playgroup during the day (e.g. to attend a hospital appointment), they must provide an explanation to ensure that staff know the time they will be collected, who they will be collected by and at what time they are due to return. Explanations can take the form of a written note, email, text, telephone call or in person.

Parents should be advised to contact Playgroup within one hour of the start of the session if their child will not be attending the session and staff have no prior notification of this (e.g. if child wakes unwell and is unable to attend Playgroup on that day).

Please note that staff contact Torphins Primary School at 9:15am each morning to confirm lunch numbers. If your child will not require lunch for any given day, please contact staff before 9:15am. If not, and if you self-fund your child's lunch, you will still be charged.

Parents should be advised to contact Playgroup themselves and not rely on another parent to do this for them.

If able to do so, parents should advise when they expect their child to return to Playgroup.

Playgroup has a messaging service on the Playgroup telephone number 013398 82978 which allows Parents to leave a message outwith normal Playgroup hours. Alternatively, please send an email to enquiry@torphinsplaygroup.co.uk.

Playgroup will develop a clear system of signing in and signing out of children to ensure that staff know who is present in the building at any one time.

Playgroup must ensure that their emergency evacuation procedure is aligned to the attendance register to accurately account for all children in the case of an unplanned evacuation of the building.

Unexplained Absence

When a child is marked absent, and if no advance notification of a reason for absence has been received, attempts to make contact with home after one hour of the start of the session will be made by telephone, email or text.

Parents should be advised to respond promptly to any Playgroup efforts to get in touch with them.

Information received will be used to code the absence appropriately (e.g. sickness, holiday, unexplained).

Should a message raise an issue which requires further investigation, this should be passed on the Manager for follow up.

Contact should be made with named emergency contacts if parents/ carers are unable to be reached within an hour of the start of the session. If Playgroup are able to ascertain a reason for the child's absence no further action will be required.

If contact is not made and the child is known to have a sibling attending a local school, Playgroup will phone the school office and ask for any additional contacts to be phoned.

If contact still cannot be made, discussion must take place involving the Child Protection Co-ordinator and members of staff in deciding the next steps. Actions may include:

- A member of staff or the Committee visit the child's home either during or immediately after the Playgroup session
- Seeking advice / updates from other agencies
- Requesting a home visit by another agency
- Phone local police on 0845 600 5700

If the child is known to be on the 'at risk' register, Playgroup will follow the procedure instructed by the Social Work Department.

IF CONCERN ARISES AT ANY POINT FOR THE SAFETY OR WELFARE OF ANY CHILD, CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES SHOULD BE INITIATED.

Monitoring attendance

It is accepted that improving attendance has a direct correlation to improving achievement. The attendance of all children with a dip in attendance or poor attendance will be subject to close monitoring until such time as appropriate improvements are made.

Vulnerable children should be subject to more regular attendance monitoring in accordance with procedures relating to support and child protection.

General Housekeeping

Parents should be prompted to keep Playgroup up-to-date with any changes to contact details, including those of emergency contacts.

It is good practice to flag any concern (including those relating to attendance) to health visitors. Multi-agency input at this early stage can be very effective in challenging patterns before they become established, and the development of effective parenting skills can be supported.

It is good practice for concerns surrounding attendance to be flagged at transition points between Playgroup to Nursery or Playgroup to School.