



09.02 Early Years Attendance, Punctuality and Absence Policy

Even when you're very small, good attendance makes a BIG difference ...

Aim

Riverside Pre-school CIO aims to promote good attendance and punctuality in partnership with parents and carers in early years, ensuring that good habits are formed early so that children are school ready.

Rationale

Regular early years attendance is important for all children as it is only through regular, consistent routines that children build up the secure attachments they need for healthy development.

Research shows that regular part-time attendance from the age of two in a good quality early years setting has a lasting impact on children's social development and intellectual attainment throughout school. (Research Brief RBF15-03 The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education Project: Findings from the Pre-school Period. Sylva et al, IOE, 2003).

Regular attendance has a positive impact on all aspects of a young child's learning and development. A regular routine supports the young child to feel settled and secure. Unsettled children have higher stress levels which, in turn, prevent them from being able to benefit fully from the learning opportunities available.

We take steps to ensure that children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and they do not miss out on 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. Parents 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 persons must also adhere to Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from childcare.

Procedures

We promote good attendance and punctuality by:

- Ensuring children attend for the expected hours, arriving and leaving at the stated pre-school session times
- Recording arrival and departure times on Famly and on the paper register (emergency roll-call)
- Recording late arrivals or early collections on the child's Famly account and including the reason
- Monitoring late arrival and early collection via the paper register
- Requiring parents to call the setting if they are going to be late or absent
- Requiring parents to report sickness by 9.30am, which is then recorded in Famly, on the paper register and in the setting's diary
- Requiring parents to complete a 'holiday request' via Famly if they are planning a holiday during term time so this can be recorded accurately in our registers
- Monitoring children's attendance via Famly

There will be no fee reductions or reimbursements for any child absenteeism.

Supporting families

We recognise that sometimes families may need extra support with attendance and punctuality, therefore good communication is essential between them and their child's key person. We will work with parents/carers

to support a child's good attendance and punctuality. Where children's attendance is poor and not improving, we will talk to them about the available support from their local children's centre such as implementing bedtime routines or attending parenting classes.

Changes to sessions attended

If you wish to reduce the number of your child's sessions, or are leaving the pre-school, we require written notification at least four weeks before the end of any given term. Failure to give sufficient notice will result in pre-school losing vital funding for which the parent will have to pay.

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 leadership team should discuss a child's attendance with their parents to ascertain any potential barriers i.e. transport, working patterns etc and should work with the parent/s to offer support where possible.
- If poor attendance continues and strategies to support are not having an impact, the designated person must review the situation and decide if a referral to Children's Resource Services 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, taking into account 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.

If at any time further information comes to light that gives cause for concern, procedure 06.1 Responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns is immediately followed.

Missed hours and absence for funded hours

Southampton City Council Funding Team is keen to ensure that families are correctly using all the entitlement they are claiming and are requesting that we monitor unattended sessions whether holiday, sickness or unexplained. Southampton City Council will only fund a child's place due to holiday for two weeks. For holidays of longer than two weeks parents/carers will be required to pay to cover any further missed sessions. We CANNOT keep a place open without this payment. If a funded child is continually absent from particular sessions, we will discuss this with the parent/carer and, if the situation does not improve, a reduction will be made in accordance with Southampton City Council's funding conditions.

Withdrawing a place

We will make every effort to support good attendance and punctuality, as suggested above. However, if there are no other indicators of concern or vulnerability and your child has failed to attend for four consecutive weeks or more without a justifiable reason, we may withdraw your child's place. The process for formally withdrawing a child's place is as follows:

- We will attempt to contact the family twice weekly to seek a justifiable explanation (by telephone or home visit and followed up by email), including, of course, first day calling
- We will send a recorded delivery letter during the third week to invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the situation and warning them of the action that will be taken after the fourth week
- We will continue to attempt twice weekly contact by phone and email
- We will send a recorded delivery letter in the final week, explaining that the place will be withdrawn on a specific date

Transition

If you decide to move your child to another setting, please inform us so that we can remove them from our register and send the records to the new setting to ensure a smooth transition.

This policy was adopted at a committee meeting of Riverside Pre-school CIO

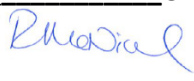
Held on: _____ 14th June 2023 _____

Date to be reviewed: _____ February 2024 _____

Signed on behalf of the trustees of the charity:

Full name: _____ Rachel McNicol _____

Position: _____ Chairperson _____

Signature: _____  _____ **Date:** _____ 14/6/2023 _____