



Managing Children's Absence Procedure

Purpose of Procedure

In a recent Serious Case Review, (Tower Hamlets, 2015) into the death of a baby from neglect and malnutrition, a sibling had been registered at a Nursery but had stopped attending. By not following up the absences the Nursery in question was found to have missed an opportunity to alert other agencies that all was not well in the home, which might have led to help being provided in time to save the child. At Apples and Honey we recognise that monitoring attendances and following up unexplained absences is part of our responsibility for Safeguarding children. The following procedure will be used to ensure that we manage absences appropriately.

1. All parents have been asked to let the Nursery know in advance where they have planned absences, e.g. holidays or medical appointments. These absences are noted in the Nursery diary, which is checked each morning. The relevant information will be transferred to the register for that day.
2. All parents have been asked to contact the Nursery by telephone if their child will be absent that day, e.g. because of illness, or if they will be very delayed in arriving, e.g. because of transport problems.
3. If a child does not attend a session for which they are registered and we receive no communication or explanation from the parents, a senior member of staff will telephone the child's parents that day to seek an explanation, leaving a message if there is no response. An explanation received from the parent will be noted in the register for that day. If the child then resumes regular attendance, no further action will be taken unless there are other signs that the child is at risk.
4. If the parents do not respond to the telephone message and the child does not return to Nursery for their next registered session, another attempt will be made to contact the parents by telephone. If there is still no reply, an email will also be sent to the parents, explaining that we are concerned that we have not been able to contact them, asking them to contact us immediately and explaining that we will try to contact all the people on the child's emergency contacts list if we do not hear from them by the following working day.
5. On the next working day, if we still have not had a response from the parents, we will contact all the people on the emergency contact list to ask if they have seen the child and whether they know any explanation why the child should be absent, e.g. that the family has gone on holiday. If one of the people listed on the emergency contacts list has seen the family or is able to give an explanation for the absence, we will explain that we need to be able to speak to the parents directly. If they have different or additional means of contacting the parents, we would ask them to let the parents know that we need to speak to them



urgently. If we are unable to get any response from any of the emergency contacts, or if they have not had contact with the child or family either, we will make one last attempt to contact the parents by all their listed contact numbers and email addresses, explaining that if we have not heard from them by the following day, we will have no option but to contact the Wandsworth Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

6. If we still have not had a satisfactory explanation from the parents by the following day, we will submit an Early Help Assessment Form to the MASH, to alert them to the fact that a child has gone missing from the Nursery and, despite multiple efforts, we have been unable to contact the family.

Children of Nursery age are prone to infections and so may have repeated absences for illnesses. However, if a member of Nursery staff feels concerned that an explanation provided by a parent for absence may be false, for example, because of a remark made by the child, or that the absences are particularly frequent or long-lasting and are not consistent with the explanations provided, they should raise this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or the deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. Depending on the circumstances, the DSLs may seek further information from the parents, or complete an EHA for direct referral to the MASH, if there are concerns that a child is at immediate risk of suffering harm.

Completed: 04/09/17

To be reviewed: 04/09/18