Attendance & Child Absence Policy

Statement of intent

The early years are a critical time to establish the good habits and routines needed throughout life and to get the key messages about the importance of good attendance and punctuality at pre-school across to parents/carers. It is part of our duty in supporting the welfare and safeguarding of children in our care, to maintain the importance of good attendance at our setting. There can be particular issues in maintaining good attendance and punctuality for families with very young children, which need to be dealt with sensitively and proportionately. Regular attendance is important for all children, insofar as it is only through regular, consistent routines that children build up the secure attachments they need for healthy development.

Procedures:

- To ensure all parents/ carers are aware of the requirement to inform the setting if their child is going to be absent for their session.

- This must be done by telephone on the Preschool number: **07501 656410** or via email **preschoolstmichaels@outlook.com** as early as possible on the first day of absence.

- In the event of an illness with set exclusion periods, e.g. a contagious disease or temperature, the parent/carer must inform the setting of the expected date of their child's return. If this date changes the parent/carer must contact the setting again to inform them of a further absence.

- In the event of the parent/carer **not** contacting the setting by 10 am the pre-school manager or deputy will attempt to make telephone contact with them to obtain the reason for the absence. **For Safeguarding reasons if we do not hear from you on the day the child is absent we will contact you to ascertain the reason for the child's absence. If we cannot get hold of you we will contact the emergency contacts on your registration form.**

- Absence due to illness, religious/cultural days of observance or booked holidays, will be classed as **authorised** absences. However, absence without any reason given, or without any contact being able to be made despite our attempts, will be classed as **unauthorised.**
- Records are kept for children who are absent from the setting. These records are regularly monitored by the Manager.
- Absence records are kept for at least three years, or until the next Ofsted inspection following a cohort of children moving on to school.

Dealing with unauthorised absences

- If a child has regular unauthorised absence the parent/carer will be reminded of the importance of good attendance at our setting.
- If there is a further unauthorised absence, the Pre-school Manager will arrange a brief meeting with the Parent/carer to find out if there are any issues they might need support with. A written record will be held of this meeting
- Any further unauthorised absences will prompt action in accordance with our Safeguarding policy and procedures, which may include notifying authorities where necessary.

Dealing with authorised absences

- Young children will be ill from time to time and as a setting we fully understand that. However repeated absence due to illness can in rare cases be a sign that further support is needed.
- If a pattern of absence is apparent, parents/carers will be contacted to arrange to come in and discuss this further. A written record of this will be kept.
- It may be that medical advice is necessary, for example in the case of a child who repeatedly gets ill with the same thing; this should not be seen by the parent/carer as a direct fault of their own and we want all families to understand that we are here to support them, whilst maintaining our own obligation to consider the welfare of the children as our priority.

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, Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults 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 Children's Services and makes a referral if advised. Contact with Children's Services 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 Safeguarding incident reporting form, and Children's Services 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.

Punctuality

From starting at pre-school, parents/carers must make sure their child arrives at the setting on time, every day. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible disruption to the daily routine for their child and the other children.

Upon registration, parents/carers will receive a written Attendance & Child Absence policy, which will outline their responsibilities regarding attendance and the procedures the setting will follow in cases of unexplained or repeated absences.

Parents/carers will be required to acknowledge and agree to the Attendance policy as part of their child's registration.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of: St Michael's Pre-school

Reviewed and updated on 12th September 2026