

Sticky Fingers aspires to provide a safe, fun and welcoming environment for everyone. We offer children experiences to support their development, empowering them to reach their full potential



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09 Early years practice procedures

09.02 Attendance and Absence

We take steps to ensure that children are kept safe, that their wellbeing is promoted, and that they do not miss out on their entitlements and opportunities. At the very least, good attendance (95% or above) 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.

Good Early Years Attendance = Best Chances of Success

Good attendance in the Early Years offers opportunities for children to:

- Develop social skills with their peers, make friends and learn how to get on with others
- Learn and develop their skills and learn through play, this includes early language, reading and maths skills
- Develop good habits for future school attendance and good attendance and punctuality skills into adulthood
- Children who attend every planned session develop a feel for the rhythm of the week and gain a sense of security from the regular elements of early years routines
 - Develop a sense of belonging to support developing self-esteem and confidence
 - Grow emotional resilience and self-regulation skills

Absence Procedures

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 expected to contact the setting within one hour of the time the child would have been expected to arrive to advise of their child's absence. Designated Safeguarding Leads must also adhere to Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) requirements, procedures and contact protocols for children who are absent or missing from the provision.

- We ask that parents confirm planned holidays by email where possible with as much notice as possible.

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- If a child who normally attends fails to arrive and no contact has been received from their parents, the setting takes immediate action to contact them to seek an explanation for the absence and be assured that the child is safe and well.
- Attempts to contact the child's parents by 10 am (all day or morning sessions) and 1pm (afternoon session) will be made and continued attempts to contact parents or other named contacts continue throughout the day on the first day of absence.
- If no contact is made with the parents and there is no means to verify the reason for the child's absence i.e. through a named contact on the child's registration form, this is recorded as an unexplained absence on the child's personal file and is followed up by the setting each day until contact is made.
- If we are still unable to make contact and have not been informed of the child's absence then we may need to make a home visit for a welfare check.
- If we are unable to reach you within **48 hours** and still have no explanation, we may be required to notify children's services in accordance with the Children's Act 2004 or the Police, again for a welfare check.
- We will continue to check in with the parents throughout the child's absence and follow absence procedures if no contact can be made to ensure that the family are safe and well.
- All absences are recorded on the child's personal attendance record and online CPOMS file with the reason given for the absence, the expected duration, the actual duration, the method of communication, any additional notes and any follow up action taken or required with timescales.
- Paper copies of the child's absence records are retained for at least three years, or until the next Ofsted inspection following a cohort of children moving on to school.
- If we have concerns regarding the welfare of the child, we will follow the procedures in our **06 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults policy booklet**.
- We closely monitor attendance levels and where a child's absence levels are a cause for concern, due to repeated unexplained, prolonged absences or attendance levels dropping below 95%, the lead practitioner will have a discussion with the parents to establish if and where, as a setting, we can overcome any barriers and help to promote better attendance levels.

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THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP DAYS FOR ABSENCES which are not caused by the setting.

- The preschool reserves the right to give the place to another child after 2 weeks, without notifying the child's parents. A letter to parents will be sent as a record that this has taken place.
- If a child is receiving Nursery Education Funding, all attendance may be checked by the local authority and parents may be charged for absences if they are unauthorised or deemed to be an unacceptable reason for absence.
- If a child is absent for a period of 2 weeks, we are required to notify Southampton City Council as part of our Nursery Education Funding Expectations. If a child is not set to return to the setting, the Nursery Education Funding will be withdrawn.

Safeguarding vulnerable children

- The setting attempts to contact the parents to establish why the child is absent. If contact is made and a valid reason given, the information is recorded in the child's absence file and their online CPOMS record.
- 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 safeguarding lead 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 comes to light that gives cause for concern, procedures in our **06 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults policy booklet** are followed immediately.

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.

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- In the first instance the settings lead practitioner 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 settings lead practitioner 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, 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.

Late Arrival

To help prepare children for school and support their routine, we expect children to arrive on time.

Late arrivals disrupt the setting and cause children to miss out on valuable activities such as group time and settling in. Please ensure your child arrives promptly for the start of their session.