



## Children Missing in Education

A child who is missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, Silsoe Pre-School will put in place appropriate safeguarding responses if children are missing from Pre-School. The bigger picture of children who are routinely missing education, especially once they are legally required to be in education, is that they are not receiving a suitable education and are more likely to be vulnerable and at risk of negative outcomes which may have implications on later life chances. They are also at greater risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Here at Silsoe Pre-School, parents are not legally required to ensure that their children attend the Pre-School as the children are all aged 4 and under, however we do monitor the children's attendance.

Here in the Pre-School we train staff as part of our Safeguarding training to think the unthinkable and believe the unbelievable. Children who are missing Pre-School for long periods of time may be at risk from the following situations:

- Risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, Trafficking, FGM or Radicalisation
- Their families may be in the witness protection programme and may be required to relocate without explanation or trace;
- Families may be involved in fraud, social difficulties, crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Families who disappear without trace when asylum has not been granted or if accommodation has not been allocated in their preferred location.

### Monitoring Attendance

We will follow-up unexplained absences of any children with a telephone call from Pre-School on the morning of the first of absence and priority will be given to vulnerable children especially those on child protection plan.

Absent children will be recorded on our absence log which is kept with the registers detailing:

- The reason for absence
- Who has notified Pre-School
- The member of staff who took the message
- The date

If the child has had reoccurring illnesses, we can monitor this and discuss this with the parent/carers should we have any concerns about the child's health and may be support the parent to seek further advice about their child's health.

If staff are concerned that the child may be at risk of Munchausen syndrome, which is a factitious disorder, a mental disorder in which a person repeatedly and deliberately acts as if he or she has a physical or mental illness when he or she is not really sick. Munchausen syndrome is considered a mental illness because it is associated with severe

emotional difficulties; children may be at risk of a parent or family member with this disorder who transfers this to their child's health as well.

### **What we will do**

When a child's attendance is poor, the Pre-School Manager and key person will meet with the family to discuss the child's attendance. If there are any concerns that the family wish to disclose to us, we can address this at the time and take appropriate action to support the family.

When a child misses a session we will contact the family via the telephone numbers given at the time of registering, if the parent cannot be contacted we will try again on the next session missed.

If the child has been absent for a two days with no contact we will try to contact the emergency contacts on the child's information sheets. If they cannot offer an explanation for the child's absence and we still cannot contact the family, we will write to the family.

If we have concerns about the safety of the family or child we will contact Early Help Assessment (EHA) for further advice. If the child is missing for longer and no contact can be made, we will notify EHA for advice about the child and family. Please see the Child Missing in Education flow chart for step by step guidance.

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