

**Perth & Kinross Council
Education and Children's Services**

**Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)
ABSENCE PROTOCOL**

Practitioners in our ELC settings are committed, in partnership with parents/carers, to ensuring that children attend on a regular basis. The non-statutory nature of ELC attendance does not reduce the requirement to record/share/take account of any concerns around a family.

In order to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all children it is essential that parents/carers exercise responsibility to: -

- Keep the setting up to date with telephone numbers and emergency contacts.
- Inform the setting of any pre-arranged absence.
- Inform the setting of their child's absence no later than 15 minutes after the start of the session.
- Respond promptly to contacts from the setting asking why their child is absent.
- Share any concerns they have around their family with ELC practitioners to help ensure appropriate support for the child; and/or share those concerns with the child's Named Person.

The ELC staff will:

- Keep a regular and accurate record of attendance for all children.
- Encourage good attendance by providing a welcoming atmosphere for children and parents.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any adult/child concerns.
- Ensure the name and contact details of each child's Named Person are easily accessible.
- Ensure that parents/carers are aware of the range of communication methods they can use to notify the setting about their child's absence from nursery (e.g. face-to-face, phone call, text etc.).
- Share any concerns they have about a child's wellbeing with the child's Named Person.
- Take account of known vulnerabilities, including any referred to on the child's ELC Registration Form, when following up on any child's unplanned absence from the setting.
- Explore parents/carers' concerns and / or difficulties and make sound judgements as how to best support the parent/carer.

- Provide regular reminders to parents/carers about the importance of following the setting's absence procedure.
- Recognise there will be occasions when a parent/carer will consider practitioners' concerns to be unjustified. However the health, safety and wellbeing of children is the utmost importance and will be the key consideration.

Should a child be absent without explanation the following procedure will be followed:

- On the first day of absence the setting will make efforts to contact parents, carers or listed emergency contact(s) to establish a reason for absence and that the child is safe.
- If no contact can be made, centre/school management will take appropriate action to ensure the child is safe:
 - This will always include notifying the child's Named Person for their information and action as necessary and Lead Professional if appropriate. For ELC children the Named Person is the Health Visitor, or where the family is supported by the Family Nurse Partnership, then that person may take on the Named Person role.
 - Centre/School management action will also include contacting the emergency contact and other family members as may be known.
 - As the health, safety and wellbeing of all children is of the utmost importance, the setting will further implement Child Protection procedures when that is thought to be appropriate.

Parents/carers will be informed of this policy through the ELC handbook and at induction meetings prior to their child starting the setting. General reminders for all parents/carers will be provided by practitioners through the session using the following: newsletters, display boards and website updates.

This protocol is available on the council website.