

NURSERY ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Shine we are committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and consistent development of every child. Regular attendance is vital for children and young people to fully benefit from the experiences we offer. This policy outlines the expectations for attendance and procedures surrounding absences from the setting.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and welfare of every child and their family.

Types of Absence:

- **Authorised absence:** may include illness, medical appointments, religious commitments, or holidays. These are characterised by prior agreement between parent/carer and setting
- **Unauthorised absence:** include no prior warning, no explanation or unjustified reasons for non-attendance

Key Principles:

- Regular attendance is crucial for children and young people's learning, development and wellbeing
- Children and young people should arrive on time to make the most of their session
- Unexplained absences will be recorded and any notes regarding the situation recorded
- Open communication is essential, and any concealed or poorly excused absences will be noted

Nursery Attendance

We believe all young children should have an equal opportunity to access high quality early years education. Although early education is not compulsory, we closely monitor all our children's attendance as this helps develop positive routines and supports school readiness.

Persistent regular absence can indicate vulnerabilities and/or risks within the home environment. For this reason, we will closely monitor registers, including drop-off and collection times, and will consider patterns and trends, using professional judgement when determining if an absence is concerning. Any concerns will initiate our safeguarding procedures.

Due to demands of our growing waiting list, the nursery reserves the right to terminate the agreement if a child's attendance persistently falls below 50%, except in cases where the manager deems there to be 'exceptional circumstances', e.g., time off for medical appointments, safeguarding and welfare concerns; and where consistent attempts have been made by the manager to contact parents/carers through phone calls, emails and letters over the period of one term, with little to no response and no increase in attendance to over 40%. A final letter will be sent to parent/carers confirming that the space has been made available to waiting families.

In cases where a child's placement is terminated due to low attendance, the nursery may contact Children's Services in line with the Children's Act 2004.

Reporting an absence

If your child is unable to attend on their scheduled day, you are expected to notify us prior to their planned start time and, unless otherwise agreed (for example, your child has a sickness/diarrhoea

bug which requires 48-hours away from the setting following the last bout of sickness/diarrhoea), you should notify us each day they will not be in.

Absences can be reported via phone (01493661000), email (info@shine-gy.org.uk) or through message on our social media page or Tapestry Journal.

Parental Responsibilities:

- Inform us of your child/young person's absence as soon as you are aware they will not be in, and each subsequent day of absence unless agreed otherwise
- Inform Shine of absence via telephone, email, social media message or Tapestry
- Work in partnership with Shine to address any barriers or concerns around regular attendance, including attending meetings where appropriate

Staff Responsibilities:

- Complete factual registers each session, including arrival and collection times, and detail reasons for any absences
- Follow up on unexplained absences by:
 - First attempt to contact main parent/carer, second and third attempts
 - If unsuccessful in contacting main parent/carer, attempting to contact the 1st and 2nd emergency contact to ensure the child/young person is safe
- Reporting any absence concerns to Nursery Manager and/or Senior Manager
- The manager(s) will take appropriate action which may involve contacting Norfolk County Council or Children's Services
- If the child is already known to Children's Services, we will contact the allocated worker to inform them of the absence

Unexplained absences

We monitor absences very closely as they may give us reason to be concerned about the child or family. Should we not be notified of a child's absence, we will make attempts to contact the parent/carer or emergency contacts listed to enquire about their whereabouts. If we are still unable to make contact and have no explanation within 48 hours, we may be required to notify Children's Services in accordance with the Children's Act 2004.

Emergency Contacts

We are required to hold **at least two** emergency contacts additional to the contact details of the child's main parent/carer. These contacts are those who would be available in an emergency to collect your child from the setting. Additional contacts could include:

- Second parent/carer
- Grandparents
- Aunties and Uncles
- Close family friends

Late Collection

Unforeseen incidents happen, however if you are not able to pick your child up at the agreed time you are expected to ring the provision and explain. In the event of a child not being collected from nursery at the agreed time by parents/carers Shine Day Nursery reserves the right to impose a 'late collection' charge, more information on the charge can be found within the Terms and Conditions.

If a child has not been collected from nursery and we are unable to contact the primary parent/carer after 10 minutes, management will then make attempts to contact any of the emergency contacts detailed on the registration form. Failure to make contact with these after a further 10 minutes will result in us deferring to our safeguarding procedures and calling the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) for advice and referral.

In the event that a child is sent home from nursery due to accident or illness, and we are unable to contact primary and emergency contacts, staff will follow the above procedure.

Relevant policies:

- Nursery Terms and Conditions
- Nursery Charging Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness, or in line with organisational, local and national guidance and recommendations.

Policy written by: Rhiannon Hart/Senior Manager

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Next review: July 2026