

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

NURSERY ABSENCE POLICY

The staff at our nursery is committed, in partnership with parents/carers, to ensuring that children attend nursery on a regular basis. The non-statutory nature of nursery attendance does not diminish 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 nursery/school up to date with telephone numbers and emergency contacts.
- Inform the nursery/school of any pre-arranged absence.
- Inform the nursery/school of their child's absence no later than 15 minutes after the start of the session.
- Respond promptly to contacts from nursery/school asking why their child is not in nursery.
- Share any concerns they have around their family with nursery staff to help ensure sensitive support for the child; and/or share those concerns with the child's Named Person.

The nursery 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 nursery staff 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 Nursery Registration Form, when following up on any child's unplanned absence from nursery.
- 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 nursery absence procedure.
- Recognise there will be occasions when a parent/carer will consider staff concerns to be unjustified. However the health, safety and wellbeing of children is of paramount importance and will be the staff's key consideration.

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

- On the first day of absence the school 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, school management will take appropriate action to ensure the child is safe. This will always include notifying the child's Named Person. For nursery children this is usually the Health Visitor.
- As the health, safety and wellbeing of all children is of paramount importance, the school will further implement Child Protection procedures when that is thought to be appropriate.

Parents/carers will be informed of this policy through the nursery handbook and at nursery induction meetings prior to their child starting nursery. General reminders for all parents/carers will be provided by the nursery staff through e.g. newsletters, display boards and website updates.

Health colleagues have indicated that a generic Named Person contact phone line will be established within the next 6 months and operating Monday-Friday, to support staff on any occasion when communication with a child's Health Visitor (who is their Named Person) is required and direct contact is not able to be made for any reason.