DERBYSHIRE County Council

D: Child absences – Group and school-based providers

What do I need to know?

- Legal Framework
  - The Children Act 1989
  - Children Act 2004
  - Protection of Children Act 1978
  - Data Protection Act 1998
  - Children Act 2004 - Explanatory Notes
  - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
  - Sexual Offences Act 2003
  - Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (legislation.gov.uk)
  - Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk)
- EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers page 25, paragraph 3.11 – 3.12
- **See model Child Protection Policies on SchoolsNet and links below for contact details and training opportunities.**

Child absences (page 13 of audit)	**Things to consider and discuss:**
Do you **ensure** you follow up on absences in a timely manner?	• How do you monitor children's attendance to your setting? • How do you know that your attendance monitoring processes will capture absences to support you to follow up on any absences in a timely manner? • What does timely mean to you? Who decides this time frame?
Do you **ensure** you contact the child's parent and, or carer and alternative emergency contacts if a child is absent for a prolonged period of time, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer?	• What does prolonged mean? Is this time frame the same for all children? • How do you ensure you have up to date contact information? • How many contact details do you hold for each parent? Does this include landline, work and mobile numbers? • How many emergency contact details do you have for the children? • How do parents report child absences with you?

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Child absences (page 13 of audit)	Things to consider and discuss:
Do you **ensure** patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances are considered? Do you use your professional judgement when deciding if a child's absence should be considered as prolonged?	• How does your attendance monitoring capture trends and patterns • Do you record the reasons for absences? • How do you check back with the parent and, or child (if appropriate) when a child returns from an absence period? • Do you hold professional conversations with wider staff around an absence or prolonged period of absence to discuss any emerging trends or patterns?
Do you **ensure** you take into consideration the child's vulnerability, parent's and, or carer's vulnerability and their home life?	• What does vulnerable mean to you? What information do you already know about the children in your care to add to your professional knowledge of the child and their, or their parents and, or carers vulnerabilities and home life? • How do you know what 'home life' is like for the child in your care?

Do you **ensure** that any concerns are referred to local children's social care services and, or a police welfare check is requested?	• Do you and all staff know how to make a referral to children's social care services? Do you know how to request a police welfare check?
	• What steps would you take if you were asked to complete a safe and well check? Do you have a policy that covers how this would be completed safely?
	• Do you have up to date contact information for safeguarding partnerships?
	• Have you considered that you may need a different telephone number for a child who resides within in a different local authority?
	• Does your policy adequately enable you to notify agencies with statutory responsibilities **without delay** if they have concerns about a child's safety or welfare, i.e. social care services and, in an emergency, the police?
	• How do you and all staff know how to report or make a referral to about:
	  • Police
	  • Starting Point
	  • Local Safeguarding Designated Officer (LADO)
	  • Family Help Services & assessment

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Child absences (page 13 of audit)	Things to consider and discuss:
	- Children's Social Care - Prevent - Channel - Female Genital Mutilation - Online safety concerns - National Referral Mechanism • How do you know referrals are made without delay?
Do you **ensure** you have an attendance policy that you share with parents and, or carers?	• Who has written this attendance policy and how often is this updated? • How is the attendance policy shared with parents and carers? • How do you know that all parents and carers have understood the attendance policy? • How do you support parents where English is not their first language?
Do you **ensure** that your attendance policy include expectations for reporting child absences and the actions you will take if a child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period of time?	• Does your attendance policy have clear expectations and processes? • Does your policy clearly state what you will do if a child is absence without a prior notification or for prolonged periods of time? • Are parents and carers supported to understand their role in notifying you of any absences? Do they know how to communicate this absence e.g. by a certain time, by telephone call, text or email? What can your parents do if they know they are not contactable e.g. attending a funeral?
Do you implement your setting's safeguarding procedures by following up with the parents and, or carers and contacting emergency contacts if parents and, or carers are not contactable?	• What does your policy say you will do if a parent is not contactable? • What does your policy say about emergency contacts? • How many contact details do you have for parents and does this include alternative methods of contact e.g. email, work landline numbers.

Useful links and further help:

Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings
Early years inspection handbook
Report a serious childcare incident
Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners
Safer Recruitment Consortium - (Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings)
Disqualification Under the Childcare Act
Counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST) 2018
Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) guidance
National Referral Mechanism Guidance
Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners
Data protection
ICO – Information Commissioners Office
NSPCC – National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Derbyshire County Council - Support for families and early help
Prevent referrals (saferderbyshire.gov.uk)

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Child or adult at risk of immediate harm and in need of protection: Derbyshire Police – 999 / Starting Point – 01629 533190
Worried about a child: Derbyshire Police -101 / Starting Point Consultation & Advice Service for Professionals - 01629 535353 / Starting Point Referral Form/
Local Safeguarding Designated Officer - 01629 533190 / Derby and Derbyshire LADO referral form / professional.allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk
Education Data Hub/Data Protection: Email - educationdatahub@derbyshire.gov.uk
DBS The East Midlands Regional Outreach Officer: Email DBSRegionaloutreach@dbs.gov.uk /alexandra.honey1@dbs.gov.uk/ Tel: 01325 953 562 or 07867 153 500
Derby City Professional Consultation Line – new phone number: The professional consultation line number will change from 1st December 2026. The new number will be 01332 640055. There is no change to the opening hours which will continue to be 10 am – 4pm.

TRAINING

DSL training: Derbyshire Early Years Service - Eventbrite or Email: CS.EYS@derbyshire.gov.uk
Other training: Training (ddscp.org.uk)

MODEL POLICIES for the PVI sector

Safeguarding – Derbyshire SchoolsNet
Derbyshire SchoolsNet - Early Years