



Penguin Preschool Attendance and Missing Child Policy

1. Policy Statement

At Penguin Preschool, we are committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and consistent educational engagement of all children. This policy outlines our procedures for:

- Encouraging and monitoring regular attendance
- Responding to unexplained or persistent absences
- Managing uncollected or missing children
- Complying with statutory safeguarding and Local Authority protocols for Children Missing from Education (CME)

Our goal is to support children's development, wellbeing, and school readiness by fostering healthy routines and consistent attendance.

2. Importance of Attendance in Early Years

While attendance in preschool is not legally mandatory, regular attendance is strongly encouraged as it:

- Promotes children's learning, social development, and emotional wellbeing
- Establishes healthy daily routines and independence
- Prepares children for the structure and expectations of primary school

2.1 Attendance and Early Years Funding

Under the Leicestershire Local Authority guidelines, children who receive funded early education (such as 15 or 30 hours) are expected to attend regularly. Irregular attendance, unexplained absences, or prolonged periods away from the setting can result in:

- A review of the child's funded place
- Withdrawal or reduction of funding
- Notification to the Local Authority

We are required to record attendance and report absences as part of our funding agreement.

3. Reporting Absence

3.1 Daily Absence

Parents/carers must contact the preschool by **10:00am** if their child is going to be absent. You can reach us via phone or email.

If no contact is made:

1. We will attempt to reach the parent/carer.
2. If unsuccessful, we will call all listed emergency contacts.
3. If there is no response by the second day of absence, the case is escalated to the Preschool Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
4. A decision will then be made and a home welfare check undertaken.

3.2 Planned Absence

Parents should inform us in advance of:

- Holidays
- Appointments
- Other planned time off

We are required to document all planned and unplanned absences and may request written confirmation, especially for funded children.

4. Children Missing from Education (CME)

4.1 Definition

A child is considered missing from education if they:

- Are no longer attending and no new setting is confirmed
- Have persistent unexplained absence
- Have left without providing forwarding details

4.2 Early Identification

- Attendance is recorded and monitored daily.
- Absence patterns, especially 3 or more consecutive days, are flagged to management.
- Where absence cannot be explained, safeguarding concerns are considered.

4.3 Escalation Process

If a child is absent for 5 consecutive days without a valid reason:

1. A risk assessment is completed by the DSL.
2. A home visit may be arranged if necessary.
3. If no contact or new provision is confirmed, we refer the case to the Leicestershire County Council Inclusion Service as a potential CME case.

4.4 Safeguarding Considerations

If any absence raises concern for a child's safety:

- We will contact Children's Social Care and/or the police immediately.
 - The DSL leads all safeguarding referrals and documentation.
-

5. Missing or Uncollected Children

5.1 Missing Child on Site

If a child is suspected missing:

1. The staff member raises the alarm and informs the Preschool Manager.
2. A search of the premises is conducted.
3. If the child is not found within 5 minutes:
 - Police (999) and parents are contacted immediately.
 - Staff continue searching under manager direction.

All incidents are documented and reported to Ofsted and the Local Authority as required.

5.2 Missing Child on Outing

- Headcounts are completed at all stages of a trip.
- If a child goes missing:
 - Staff begin an immediate search.
 - The setting and emergency services are contacted.
 - Parents are informed, and children are kept safe.

5.3 Uncollected Child Procedure

If a child is not picked up at the end of the session:

1. Staff call parents/carers.
2. If no response, emergency contacts are called.
3. Two staff members, including a manager, remain with the child.
4. If after 1 hour the child remains uncollected:
 - Children's Social Care will be contacted
 - Police may be notified if required

All steps are recorded. Persistent late collection is addressed with the family and safeguarding lead.

6. Preventative Measures

- Secure gates and door systems at all times
 - Staff supervision and correct ratios are maintained
 - Regular headcounts and roll calls throughout the day
 - Parents are asked to inform the setting of any changes to pickup arrangements or contact details
-

7. Transitions and Leavers

- When a child leaves the setting, parents must inform us in writing and confirm the name of the new provider.
 - A transition process will be completed to ensure smooth handover.
 - If no destination is confirmed, and the child does not return, we will refer the case to the Local Authority as a CME concern.
-

8. Record-Keeping and Confidentiality

We maintain secure and accurate records of:

- Daily attendance
- Contact attempts and outcomes
- Risk assessments and safeguarding concerns
- CME referrals and communication with external agencies

All records are handled in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

9. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy aligns with:

- **EYFS Statutory Framework (2024)**
 - **Leicestershire CME and Early Years Attendance Guidance**
 - **Children Act 1989 & 2004**
 - **Education Act 1996**
 - **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018, updated 2023)**
-

10. Communication and Review

- This policy is provided to all families at enrolment.
- Available on our website or in print upon request.
- Reviewed annually or earlier if guidance changes.

Reviewed 17/8/2026 Sarah Fielding

11. Contact Us

Please report all absences by 10:00am.

If you have questions or concerns, contact the Preschool Manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.