



Child Attendance Policy

Purpose of the Policy

At Little Wildflowers Childcare, the safety, well-being, and accountability for every child in my care are of utmost importance. This policy sets out clear procedures to manage and respond to safeguarding concerns related to absences and non-collection.

These procedures are designed to ensure that absence-related concerns are identified and addressed promptly, and that appropriate agencies are contacted without delay when necessary. The policy also supports transparent communication with parents, carers, and safeguarding authorities, and ensures compliance with regulatory requirements.

Notifying an Absence

If your child is unable to attend the setting, please notify me as soon as possible. When doing so, please include the reason for the absence and the expected date of return. During business hours, contact should be made by phone in the first instance. If you need to notify me outside of business hours, a text message is acceptable. Please be aware that I may not be able to respond to messages received outside of business hours until the setting reopens.

Please also be aware that irregular attendance can result in funding being withdrawn by the Local Authority.

Procedures for Unnotified Absence of a Child

In the event a child has not arrived at the setting at the agreed drop-off time, I will follow a structured procedure to ensure the child's safety and well-being.

- If a child has not arrived within 20 minutes of their agreed drop-off time, I will send a text message to the parent or guardian who is normally responsible for dropping the child off at the setting.
- If no response is received within 5 minutes of the initial message, a second message will be sent to the other parent or legal guardian (if applicable).
- If 30 minutes have passed and I have not received any communication from a parent, guardian, or emergency contact, I will begin calling—rather than texting—all available contact numbers in the following order:
 - Parent(s) or legal guardian(s)
 - Emergency contact(s)
- If I am unable to reach any of the authorised individuals and there are continued concerns for the child's welfare, I will contact the Local Authority Duty Social Worker at the Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) to report the unnotified absence and seek further advice.
- I will fully cooperate with the Local Authority and any other safeguarding agencies involved. They will take the lead in determining the appropriate course of action, which may include the involvement of the police or other emergency services if necessary.

Procedures for Uncollected Children

In the event a child is not collected at the agreed collection time, I will follow a structured procedure to ensure the child's safety and well-being:

- I will provide reassurance to the child to help them feel secure and cared for during the waiting period.
- I will never release a child from my care to someone who is not authorised to collect them, ensuring their safety and security.
- If parents or carers have not been reached within 30 minutes of the agreed collection time, I will contact the emergency contact persons identified within the child's records and arrange for them to collect the child.
- If all attempts to contact authorised persons fail, I will contact the Local Authority Duty Social Worker at MAST for further guidance and assistance.
- I will cooperate fully with the Local Authority Duty Social Worker, who will take charge of the situation and determine the appropriate course of action, including involvement of the police if necessary.

Recording and Incident Logging

I will record any instance of unnotified absence or uncollected child as an incident. Where appropriate, I will ask parents or carers to sign and date the Incident Log to confirm their awareness, maintaining transparency and accountability.

Additional Charges for Extended Care

Additional charges will apply for any time a child remains in my care beyond the agreed collection time. Details of the applicable rates are set out in my fees schedule.

Registration System and Record-Keeping

I maintain a registration system for the arrival and departure of children in my care. These records are kept clear, accurate, and up-to-date as required by regulatory standards. Records are retained for a minimum of three years after the child leaves the setting. Where an attendance record relates to a safeguarding concern, it will be retained until the child reaches the age of 25, in line with my Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Prolonged Absence or Patterns of Concern

While it is normal for children to occasionally be unwell, I will remain alert to patterns or trends in absences. Taking into account my understanding of the child's individual circumstances, I will use my professional judgement to assess whether an absence appears prolonged or raises safeguarding concerns.

Any concerns regarding absence will be reported without delay to MAST on 01422 393336. I will not attempt to investigate or resolve these concerns myself; instead, I will follow safeguarding procedures and allow the appropriate authorities to determine the next steps.

If there is an immediate concern for a child's safety, I will contact the police on 999 to request a welfare check.

Emergency Contact Details

In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework (September 2025), I require a minimum of two emergency contacts for each child, in addition to parents and legal guardians. I encourage parents to provide more than two emergency contacts where possible, as holding additional contacts supports prompt follow-up in the event of an unexplained absence and is an important safeguarding measure.

Additional Measures for Overnight Care

As I am not registered for overnight care provision, if a child has not been collected within 30 minutes of the setting's latest contracted collection time and all attempts to contact authorised persons have been exhausted, I will contact the Local Authority Duty Social Worker at MAST for guidance. The Social Worker will determine the appropriate course of action, which may include arranging temporary care for the child.

Publication & Version History

Version	Date	Description of Change
1.0	05 June 2025	Initial publication
1.1	03 June 2026	Renamed from Child Absence Policy to Child Attendance Policy to align with EYFS 2025 statutory requirement. Added emergency contacts section encouraging parents to provide additional contacts.
1.2	04 June 2026	Policy reviewed and updated: added guidance on information to include when notifying an absence; clarified incident logging scope; renamed 'Prolonged or Trends in Absence' section; strengthened additional charges wording; added record retention period; improved overnight care procedure; added 30-minute escalation threshold for uncollected children; various consistency and clarity improvements throughout.
2.0	05 June 2026	Annual review.

Next Scheduled Review: 05 June 2027

This policy is subject to ongoing revision. Minor amendments may be made between annual reviews and will be recorded in the table above.