

"This policy comes under the umbrella of Safeguarding"

St Nicolas Playgroup

Attendance Policy



1. Introduction and Aims

This policy outlines the procedures for managing children's attendance at St Nicolas Playgroup for children aged 9 months to 4 years, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework effective from September 2025. While attendance for children under statutory school age is not mandatory, regular attendance is highly beneficial for children's learning, development, and overall well-being. It helps them settle into routines, build friendships, and make the most of the learning opportunities we provide. It's also a key part of how we look out for each child's well-being, helping us spot early if they might need a little extra care or attention.

This policy aims to:

- Promote and value regular attendance and punctuality to support children's development.
- Ensure the safety and well-being of all children.
- Establish clear, collaborative procedures for reporting and following up on absences.
- Outline actions taken in cases where a child's absence is unexplained or prolonged, including safeguarding procedures.
- Clarify the shared responsibilities for parents/carers and playgroup staff.

2. Parental/Carer Responsibilities

To help us ensure the safety and well-being of your child and to comply with EYFS requirements, we kindly ask parents/carers to:

- **Notify Absences:** Please inform the playgroup as soon as possible, ideally by 9:30 AM on the first day of absence, if your child will not be attending, by calling or texting 07538 491936. Providing the reason for absence and, if known, the expected duration, helps us keep accurate records and ensures we know your child is safe.
- **Planned Absences:** We appreciate it if you can provide advance notice in writing for any planned absences (e.g., holidays, appointments) to manager@stnicolasplaygroup.co.uk. This helps us with planning and ensures we don't worry about your child's whereabouts.
- **Emergency Contact Information:** Please ensure that all emergency contact details provided to the playgroup are accurate and kept up-to-date. The playgroup requires a minimum of **two additional emergency contacts** (i.e., beyond the primary parents/carers) who can be contacted in an emergency or if primary contacts are unreachable. This is a vital safeguarding measure.

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- **Punctuality:** We encourage children to arrive on time for their sessions to help them settle into the day's activities and be collected promptly at the agreed time. If you anticipate being late for collection, please notify the playgroup immediately so we can reassure your child.

3. Playgroup Responsibilities: Managing Absences

Our playgroup is committed to monitoring attendance diligently as part of our safeguarding responsibilities and our care for your child.

3.1 Daily Attendance Monitoring

- Staff will take an accurate attendance register at the start of each session.
- Any child who is expected but not present, and for whom no notification has been received, will be flagged.

3.2 Unnotified Absences

If a child is absent without prior notification:

1. **After 3 Days:** If a child is absent for **3 consecutive days** without notification, the playgroup will then attempt to contact the primary parents/carers by telephone to ascertain the reason for absence and confirm your child's well-being.
2. **Unreachable Primary Contacts / After One Week of Absence:** If primary parents/carers cannot be reached after two attempts or within a reasonable timeframe, *and if the absence extends to a full week without notification*, staff will then attempt to contact the **additional emergency contacts** provided, in the order they are listed, to ensure we can account for your child.
3. **No Contact Made:** If, after exhausting all provided contact numbers, we are unable to make contact with anyone, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL will be informed immediately to consider next steps.

3.3 Prolonged Absences and Patterns of Absence

- The playgroup will monitor patterns and trends in a child's absences.
- Staff will use their professional judgment, considering the child's personal circumstances, vulnerability, and home life, to determine if an absence should be considered "prolonged" or if a pattern of absence gives rise to concern.
- For any prolonged absence, or if a child is consistently absent without notification, the playgroup will continue attempts to contact parents/carers and emergency contacts, as our primary concern is always the child's safety and welfare.

4. Safeguarding Concerns and Referrals

Children being absent from the setting for prolonged or unexplained periods can, in some cases, be a critical indicator of safeguarding concerns.

- **Escalation:** If, following all reasonable attempts to make contact (as outlined in Section 3.2 and 3.3), the playgroup remains unable to ascertain the child's whereabouts or the

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reason for their absence, and there are concerns for the child's safety and welfare, the DSL will be consulted.

- **Referral to Social Care:** Any concerns about a child's welfare arising from unexplained or prolonged absences *must* be referred to the local children's social care services. This referral will be made by the DSL in accordance with the playgroup's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- **Police Welfare Check:** In exceptional circumstances, where there are immediate and significant concerns for a child's safety and welfare, and no contact can be made, a police welfare check may be requested.

5. Record Keeping

- All absences, reasons for absence, and attempts to make contact (including dates, times, and outcomes of calls) will be accurately recorded in the child's attendance record.
- Any safeguarding concerns raised due to attendance issues, and subsequent referrals, will be documented in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

6. Communication with Parents/Carers

This attendance policy will be shared with all parents/carers upon their child's enrolment and will be readily available for review at any time. We encourage open communication and partnership with parents/carers to ensure the best outcomes for all children.

This policy was originally adopted by St Nicolas Playgroup in August 2025 and will be reviewed annually or before, if information changes.

This policy was reviewed by:	The Manager	Signed
On:	Date: 21 August 2025	VE Evans
Date of next review:	Date: 21 August 2026	