



Identification and Management of Absence Attacks in Children

Policy Statement

The Orchard Day Nursery is committed to promoting the health, safety, and wellbeing of all children in our care. Some children may experience absence attacks (absence seizures), which can be brief, subtle, and easily mistaken for daydreaming. These episodes may go unnoticed, particularly when staff are unaware of the condition.

This policy outlines the procedures for identifying, responding to, and managing absence attacks to ensure that children remain safe and always supported.

Purpose of the Policy

- To ensure practitioners have the skills to recognise signs of absence attacks.
- To keep children safe by implementing effective supervision and risk management.
- To outline clear response procedures when an absence attack is suspected or observed.
- To support early identification of children who may have undiagnosed absence seizures.
- To promote consistent communication between staff, parents/carers, and healthcare professionals.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All nursery staff and volunteers
- Students on placement
- Children who have a diagnosed condition
- Children showing signs of possible absence attacks (undiagnosed)

Understanding Absence Attacks

Absence attacks are short episodes where a child becomes briefly unresponsive. They typically last between 5-15 seconds. Signs may include:

- Blank staring
- Sudden stop in activity
- Lack of response to name or touch
- Eyelid fluttering or stillness
- Rapid return to normal activity without memory of the episode

Staff must recognise that episodes may be easily overlooked and do not always appear dramatic.

Roles and Responsibilities

Nursery Manager

- Ensure all staff receive training on recognising and responding to absence attacks.
- Maintain up-to-date health information and care plans.
- Oversee incident reporting and communication with parents.

All Staff

- Follow this policy at all times.
- Observe children carefully, especially during higher-risk activities.
- Report any suspected episodes to management and record them appropriately.
- Communicate sensitively with parents regarding concerns.

Parents/Carers

- Provide full medical information regarding diagnosed conditions.
- Inform the nursery of any changes in medication or medical advice.
- Work in partnership with the nursery to monitor any ongoing symptoms.

Identification and Monitoring

If a child shows signs of an absence attack (diagnosed or suspected):

- Staff must observe and document the behaviour.
- Repeated or concerning incidents must be reported to the manager.
- A confidential observation log will be maintained.
- Staff should never diagnose; instead, they must share observations with parents/carers and recommend medical follow-up.
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Risk Management and Supervision

To protect children who may experience absence attacks, the nursery will:

- Provide enhanced supervision during:
 - outdoor play
 - climbing activities
 - water play
 - meal/snack times
 - craft activities with tools
- Ensure the environment is arranged to minimise trip or fall hazards.
- Seat children safely during mealtimes and ensure close monitoring for choking risks.
- Keep walkways clear and ensure soft landing surfaces where possible.

Response Procedure for an Absence Attack

When a practitioner suspects or observes an absence attack:

1. Stay with the child and ensure safety.
2. Do not restrain the child unless guiding them away from danger.

3. Note the time and duration of the episode if possible.
4. Ensure the child resumes awareness safely and calmly.
5. Report the incident to the nursery manager or senior practitioner.
6. Record the episode in the incident/health log.
7. Inform parents/carers the same day.

Emergency Response

Call 999 and notify parents immediately if:

- The episode lasts longer than usual (e.g., over 15-20 seconds).
- Episodes occur back-to-back (cluster).
- The child does not recover promptly.
- The child appears unwell or has a different type of seizure.

9. Communication With Parents and Professionals

- All observations of suspected absence attacks must be shared sensitively with parents.
- Where episodes are frequent or increasing, the nursery may recommend medical assessment.
- For children with a diagnosis, the nursery will follow their **Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP)**.
- With parental consent, the nursery may liaise with health professionals (e.g., paediatricians, epilepsy nurses).

Training and Awareness

- All staff must receive training on:
 - recognising signs of absence seizures
 - appropriate responses
 - documentation and communication
- Training will be refreshed annually or following any policy updates.

Record Keeping

The nursery will maintain:

- Incident logs of suspected or confirmed episodes
- Individual Health Care Plans (if applicable)
- Risk assessments and environmental checks
- Communication records with parents/carers and professionals

All records will be stored securely in line with GDPR requirements.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
- After any serious incident
- When new medical guidance is received
- When a child's condition changes

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>September 2025</i>	Anjana Shah	<i>September 2026</i>