



Policy Document:

Missing Child.

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Policy statement

Children's safety is our highest priority at all times. Every attempt is made to ensure that the security of children is maintained at all times including when on Nursery outings. Every care is taken to ensure that the children are accounted for at all times; staff make regular head counts during the session. They are registered at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session, also at lunchtimes. The children are supervised in line with recommended ratios for staffing. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is as follows:

Procedures

- **Reducing the risk of children going missing**
 - We ensure that our premises - both inside and outside are safe and secure. We carry out termly risk assessments, daily checks of learning environments.
 - We ensure that gates and doors into the setting are secure and child-proof. We have RFID door entry systems on doors to ensure that children cannot leave unsupervised and visitors cannot enter unnoticed. Notices are displayed to reinforce security and the importance of closing gates where appropriate. Gates that are not in constant use are locked securely. We have a system of CCTV in place. Children are registered on arrival or are signed in if they arrive late. Children are registered again for afternoon sessions.
 - All visitors are asked to sign visitors are asked to sign a Visitors Book at main reception.
 - Ratios are always maintained so that children are adequately supervised.

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff member calmly alerts the session leader/manager.
- The session leader ensures that the remaining children are secure and supervised and will carry out a thorough search of the building and outside play area.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wonder out.
- If the child is found, the session leader/manager, parents are informed and a risk assessment is carried out to ensure that this does not happen again.
- If the child is not found, the manager, parents are informed and thorough search of the grounds is undertaken.
 - The police will be informed – this should be done within ten minutes – as an emergency, i.e dial 999.
 - A second search of the premises will be carried out whilst waiting for the police to arrive.
 - Check CCTV footage.
 - Wait for the police to arrive and then follow their instructions.

- The missing child report is made to the police and the parents are contacted by the Manager who provides the police with details of the child and the circumstances of their disappearance.
 - The Manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
 - Staff will remain calm and not allow other children to become worried or anxious.
 - The Manager informs the management committee.
 - Ofsted must be informed in writing within 14 days of such an incident occurring.
- **The Investigation**
 - The Manager speaks with the parent(s).
 - The Manager carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time of the incident.
 - The key person/staff member writes an incidents report detailing:
 - The time and date of the incident.
 - What staff/children were in the group and the name of the staff members designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the group.
 - What has taken place in the group since the child went missing including conversations and police advice.
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened and a risk assessment is undertaken to avoid reoccurrence.
 - If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a safeguarding issue to address.
 - Where applicable, the incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (See the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy.) The local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
 - In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken. The relevant body would be informed in writing by the Manager and Ofsted within 14 days.
 - The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

- Missing child incidents are a cause for concern for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or designated carer responsible for the safety of that child.
- They may blame themselves and their feeling of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be understandable target of parental anger and they may feel afraid. It is important to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the Manager. When dealing with distraught and angry parents, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Manager and the other should be the Chair. No matter how understandable the

parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.

- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. The Manager and Committee will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with press without taking advice.