



Missing Child Policy

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the exit/entrance and outings procedure to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedure for Child going missing on the premises:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the setting leader (Manager or Deputy Manager in his/her absence).
- The setting leader will carry out a thorough search of the building and outdoor 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 wander out.
- If the child is not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police. The incident is reported to the Head Teacher.
- The setting leader will carry out an investigation to find out when and where the child was last seen and the investigation is record.
- The Head Teacher and Governing Body will carry out a full investigation.

Procedure for Child going missing on an outing:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child have gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The setting leader contacts the police and reports the child missing.
- The setting leader contacts the parent who makes their way to the venue as agreed with the setting leader.
- The staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- In an indoor venue, the staff will contact the venues security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found
- The setting leader will contact the Head Teacher and inform them of the incident. Head teacher and Governing Body will carry out an investigation.

The investigation:

- Staff to remain calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The setting leader and Head Teacher will speak to the parents.
- The Governors will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff concerned.
- The Key person/staff member will write an incident report detailing:
 - Date and Time of the report
 - What staff/children were in the setting/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child
 - When the child was last seen in the setting/outing
 - What has taken place in the setting or outing since the child went missing
 - The time it was estimated that the child went missing
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened and policies and procedures must be reviewed.
- 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 child protection issue to address.
- The Head teacher will report the incident under RIDDOR arrangements and the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- A missing / lost child incident is a 'significant event'; Ofsted must be notified.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed
- The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people:

- Missing child incidents are very worrying 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 the designated carer responsible for the safety of the child or the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Setting leaders need 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 setting leader. When dealing with distraught or angry parents, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the setting leader and the other should be the Head Teacher or a Governor. 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 the children need to be focussed on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The setting leader, Head Teacher or School Governing Body will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child with the press without taking advice.

Agreed by staff: Autumn 2017
Reviewed: Autumn 2018