

Missing Child Policy and Procedure

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the outings procedure and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of children.

In the unlikely event of a child going missing, this procedure is followed.

If a child appears to be missing from within the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the Headteacher or Nursery Manager who will instigate a thorough search of the building and outdoor areas.
- The register is checked to make sure all other children are present.
- The exit /entrance to the premises are checked to see if there has been a breach of security.
- If the child is not found, the child's parents are contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.
- Headteacher or Nursery Manager gathers information from the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- They then contact the Directors and report the incident.
- Any contact or questions from the media must be directed to Director of Operations Grace Cole or in her absence, Headteacher Karen Mehta or Director of Quality Hilary Sharples. Under no circumstances should other staff speak to the media.

If a child goes missing on an outing off premises.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the group leader on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a head count to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The Headteacher / Nursery Manager are contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- They then contact the police and report the child as missing. (The staff also contact the venue's security who may then handle the search if the child is not found.)
- The Headteacher / Nursery Manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the school/nursery.
- The Headteacher/ Nursery Manager contacts the Director and reports the incident.
- Any contact or questions from the media must be directed to Director of Operations Grace Cole or in her absence, Headteacher Karen Mehta or Director of Quality Hilary Sharples. Under no circumstances should other staff speak to the media.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Headteacher / Nursery Manager speaks with the parent.
- The Headteacher / Nursery Manager carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the related staff.
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
 - What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- 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 incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may also investigate.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, the regulatory authority are informed of the outcome.
- The insurance provider is informed also.

This policy was agreed by the Development Forum and is monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure we meet our overall aims. It is available to parents and promoted and implemented throughout the Company.