

1.5 Missing child

Policy statement

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our outings procedure and our exit/entrance 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.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the child's key person/the relevant member of staff alerts the setting manager.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Our manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- 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 manager calls the police immediately and reports the child as missing. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this.
- The parent(s) are then called and informed.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing, is given to the police.
- Our manager talks to our staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.

Child going missing on an outing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- One staff member searches the immediate vicinity, but does not search beyond that.
- The senior staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports that child as missing.
- Our manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- Our manager contacts the parent(s).
- Our staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible.
- Following the advice of the police, a senior member of staff, or the manager where applicable, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.

- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The staff remain calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- The manager carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all staff and volunteers who were present.
- The management team speaks with the parent(s) and explains the process of the investigation.
- The parent(s) may also raise a complaint with ourselves or Ofsted.
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:
 - *The date and time of the incident.*
 - *Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.*
 - *Which staff/children were in the premises/on the outing and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.*
 - *When the child was last seen in the premises/or on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.*
 - *What has taken place in the premises or on the outing since the child went missing.*
- The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted are advised.
- The insurance provider is informed.

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