

General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare

The provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.



Safeguarding children

Missing Child

Policy statement

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 is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.3 Keeping safe 1.4 Health and well-being	2.2 Parents as partners	3.4 The wider context	

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the manager is alerted.
- The manager will carry out a quick search of the building and outside decked 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 within 3 minutes, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police, by the manager.
- The manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
 - The manager allocates a member of staff to keep looking for the missing child.
- The manager contacts the chair Of Directors and reports the incident. The chair of Directors, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the setting manager and/or other staff back in the setting. Or if the whole group have gone out. What to do when a child goes missing from a whole setting outing may be a little different, if parents have attended and are responsible for their own child for example a trip to Wilderness Woods. In which instance the parent would search for their missing child and the staff would provide back up help and if necessary would contact the police whilst the parent continues to search.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand still 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 setting leader or manager is contacted immediately and the incident is reported (or if the setting leader is present they will contact the police and report child as missing).
- The setting leader contacts the police and reports the child as missing.

- The setting leader contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the setting leader. The setting is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the setting.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting and one adult will stay in the vicinity of the area and will continue searching the immediate area (with a mobile phone) where the child was last seen in case the child returns. The setting leader will call them once the police have taken over the search.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The setting leader contacts the chair of Directors and reports the incident. The chair of Directors, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.
- The setting leader, or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The setting leader together with the chair or representative of Directors speaks with the parent(s).
- The chairperson and management committee carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- 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.
 - 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 want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- Ofsted is informed as soon as possible but always within 14 days. The SPOA should also be 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 that child for 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. The manager needs 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 a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the manager and the other should be the chair of Directors or representative of the Directors. 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. 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 chair of Directors will use their discretion to decide what action to take whilst adhering to legislation.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This Policy was reviewed by	Fiona Wilson – Supervisor
Adopted by	Rotherfield Pre-School Staff and Directors
Read and agreed by	
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