

Lost Child Policy/ Procedure



A child can be classed as missing or lost if they have been left unsupervised or unaccounted for (so staff are not aware of them being within sight or hearing) in a room or the outside area of the setting or further a field for 2 minutes or longer.

If a child goes missing from the setting the following actions will be carried out:

- The person in charge will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden
- 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
- The person in charge talks to staff to establish what happened
- The person in charge talks to children (using wording so as not to upset the children) to establish what has happened
- If ratios and other child safety allow, staff members can search the nearby vicinity
- If the child is found parents/carers will be informed when the child is collected that day. The situation will be explained and what will be put into place to prevent this from recurring.
- If the child is not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police
- The advice of the police is followed
- All remaining children will be kept calm

If a child goes missing when away from the setting (e.g. from an outing) where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the setting ensures that there is a procedure that is followed:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff who are with the group/ on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray
- One staff searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that unless ratios allow
- If the child isn't found, then the lead staff member contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- If the child is found parents/carers will be informed when the child is collected that day. The situation will be explained and what will be put into place to prevent this from recurring.
- If the child is not found; the person in charge of the setting contacts the child's parent, notifying them what has happened and letting them know to attend.
- The advice of the police is followed
- All remaining children will be kept calm
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting

The investigation:

- The Setting Leader carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were with the group/ on the outing
- Each key person writes an incident report detailing:
 - the date and time of the incident
 - what staff/children were in the group/outing
 - when the child was last seen in the group/outing

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- what has taken place in the group/outing since then
 - the time it is estimated that the child went missing
 - A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened
 - Children's comments are also noted if applicable
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- 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 recorded in the incident book; the local authority health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution
 - Ofsted is informed within 14 days as a Missing Child can be deemed a significant event.
 - Our Insurance company is informed
 - A decision will be made as to whether staff disciplinary processes need to be followed
 - As a result of the investigation: risk assessments, policies and procedures will be updated and all staff and families will be made aware of the changes made
 - The parents/carers of the child involved will be given information about the investigation (whilst maintaining confidentiality of any staff members and other children)

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