

MISSING CHILD

POLICY STATEMENT

Children's safety at our Nursery is maintained as the highest priority at all times, both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the exit/entrance procedure (See Risk Assessment folder, section 2) and the outings procedure (See below) 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 key persons alert the Nursery Manager, and state where the child was last seen.
- The Manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden, ensuring the doors and gates are checked for a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The Manager/ Deputy, will collect the remaining children in Area A and take the register to ensure no other children are missing.
- The remainder of the staff will assist with a thorough search to include; Toilets, Kitchens, Store Cupboard, Garden, Car Park, Church, Hall and any other possible hiding places.
- The Manager will contact the Police (999) and the parents of the missing child.
 - The Manager will contact the Chair, to report the incident. The Chair, will come to the Nursery immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management committee where applicable.

Procedures

Child going missing on an outing

A MOBILE PHONE MUST BE TAKEN ON ALL OUTINGS WITH CONTACTS FOR ALL CHILDREN AND AN OUTINGS RISK ASSESSMENT WILL HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT AND RECORDED [see risk assessment folder stored in nursery cupboard]

The following describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the Manager and/or other staff back in the Nursery. If the Manager has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

What to do when a child goes missing from a whole Nursery outing may be a little different, as parents usually attend and are responsible for their own child.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff 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 Manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident recorded. [see incident folder stored in Nursery cupboard]
- The Manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The Manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the Nursery.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the Nursery..
- 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 Manager contacts the Chair, and reports the incident. The Chair comes to the Nursery immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management committee where applicable.
- The Manager or a member of staff 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 Manager together with the Chair or representative from the management committee speaks with the parent(s).
- The Chair and management committee carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing. [see format in incident folder stored in Nursery Cupboard]
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing: [see format in incident folder, stored in Nursery Cupboard]
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff member 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 want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- 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 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 chairperson of the management committee or the representative of. 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 chairperson will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press at all.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Tilbury Nursery Management Committee

Held on _____ (date)

Date to be reviewed _____ (date)

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee

Name of signatory

Role of signatory
