



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 key person/staff alerts the setting leader.
- The register is checked to confirm the child came to the pre-school and to make sure no other child has also gone astray
- The setting leader will organise a quick search of all the rooms, toilets, cupboards and any other possible hiding places. All exits will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security. These checks will be carried out quickly and without panicking the other children.
- If the child is not found, the setting leader will organise a search of the surrounding area around the pre-school. The search will start with the member of staff going to the main road

outside the hall to check the road and service lane. He/she will then check the grounds around the hall and check by parked cars and other visual obstructions. Next, a search of the two parks and tennis courts will be made before reporting back to the session leader. This outside check will be completed as quickly as possible.

- While the initial search is made, the session leader will make enquiries of all the adults present to establish the last sighting of the child and time, clothes that the child was wearing, and the mental state of the child (happy, sad etc) This is recorded.
- If the search is unsuccessful and the child is still missing after 5 minutes the session leader Contacts the parents and the missing child is reported to the police.
- The search for the child will continue after calling the police. Any advice from the police will be followed
- The session leader will ask the parent to come to the setting, by using the normal route that the child would take and preferably by walking.
- The setting leader contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the management committee, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.
- The pre-school activities for the remaining children will continue as normal and staff will give the children proper attention.
- Telephone lines should remain as free as possible so that messages are not delayed.
- The search continues until the child is found.

Child going missing on a small group outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on a local outing around the pre-school, leaving the setting leader and/or other staff back in the setting.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff 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 member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The setting leader and manager is contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- 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. 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 leaving one member of staff behind to carry on searching for the child in the immediate vicinity and to be the point of contact for the police. The member of staff stays in contact with the setting by mobile phone. If extra support is needed to safely return the remaining children to the setting the session leader will review her staffing and instruct a member of staff to assist.

- The setting leader contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the management committee, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.
- The search continues until the child is found.

Child going missing on a whole group outing

This describes what to do when the whole group is on an outing. Parents may or may not be present. If parents do accompany their child on an outing, then they are normally responsible for their own child. The parents will be informed of this by the session leader.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff 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 member and the parent if present searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- If the search is unsuccessful and the child is still missing after 5 minutes the session leader contacts the parents if they are not on the outing, and the missing child is reported to the police.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security for assistance.
- The setting manager is contacted immediately and the incident is reported if she/he is not on the outing.
- The setting leader contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the management committee, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting or outing venue immediately.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the designated meeting point or the setting leaving one member of staff and the parent if present behind to carry on searching for the child in the immediate vicinity and to be the point of contact for the police. The member of staff stays in contact with the setting by mobile phone.
- The search continues until the child is found.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The setting leader together with the chairperson or representative from the management committee, 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 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 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. Setting leaders need 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 setting leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the setting leader and the other should be the chairperson of the management committee or representative, 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 without taking advice.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Blackmore community pre-school

Held on 22nd November 2011

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Role of signatory – Committee chair