

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

1.5 Missing child procedure

Policy statement

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the 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.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing all adults at the setting will be informed.
- The register will be checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Depending on numbers of staff and children present some staff will start an immediate search of the building and garden, while some staff remain with the other children.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security where a child could wander out.
- The session leader will talk to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- If the missing child is not found the session leader will call the police and follow their guidance.
- The parents of the missing child will be contacted.
- The child's photo on the key person board will be taken down and used to show the police.
- A second search of the area will be carried out.
- During this period, available staff will be continually searching for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain as near to normal routine as possible for the rest of the children.
- The session leader will meet the police and parents.
- The staff will await instructions from the police.
- In the unlikely event that the child is not found Pre-School will follow the local authority and police procedure.
- Any incidents will be recorded in writing as soon as practicably possible including the outcome, who was lost, time identified, notification to police and findings.
- Ofsted will be contacted and informed of any such incidents.
- With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary.
- In any cases with media attention staff will not speak to any media representatives.
- Post-incident risk assessments will be conducted following any incident of this nature to enable the chance of this reoccurring being reduced.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the setting leader and/or other staff back in the setting. If the setting leader has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. Regular head counts of children will be carried out throughout any outing or visit. In the unlikely event of a child going missing whilst on an outing the following procedure will be implemented immediately:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing all adults will be informed.
- Staff on the outing will ask the children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- Some staff will be deployed to start an immediate search of the area, ensuring that all other children remain supervised, calm and supported throughout.
- The designated person in charge will immediately inform the police.

- The designated person in charge will then inform the setting who will contact the child's parents giving details of what has happened. If the whole setting is on an outing, all contact details will be taken on the trip by the person in charge to phone the parents in an emergency along with a copy of this policy.
- The parents will be asked to make their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed.
- During this period, staff will be continually searching for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain the safety and welfare of the remaining children.
- It will be the designated person in charge or the manager's responsibility to ensure that there are adequate staff to care for the children and get them back to the setting safely. A member of staff will meet the police while the search continues (this may mean contacting relief staff).
- Any incidents must be recorded in writing as soon as practicably possible including the outcome, who was lost, time identified, notification to police and findings.
- In the unlikely event that the child is not found the staff will follow the local authority and police procedure.
- Ofsted will be contacted and informed of any incidents.
- Post-incident risk assessments will be conducted following any incident of this nature to enable the chance of this reoccurring being reduced.
- With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary
- In any cases with media attention staff will not speak to any media representatives

The investigation

The chair will 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 incident.
- 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 will 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, Morton Michel, 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. Pre-School 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 committee 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.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Fairford Pre-School	(name of provider)
Held on	21 st May 2008	(date)
Date reviewed	17/12/16	(date)
Date to be reviewed	17/12/17	
Signed on behalf of the provider	_____	
Name of signatory	_____	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	_____	