

SECTION 1

General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare

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



1.6 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

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 setting leader will carry out a thorough search of the building and patio.
- 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, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police and Ofsted.
- The setting leader talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this on the signing in/out sheet at the main entrance.

- The setting leader contacts the chairperson and reports the incident, if possible the chairperson should come to the setting immediately. If the chairperson is unavailable the Vice Chairperson should be contacted, or failing that another committee member. The chairperson, with the management committee, carries out an investigation, as to the causes of the incident and what action can be taken to prevent any recurrence.
- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes the procedures 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.

When a child goes missing from a whole setting outing may differ, 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 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 is contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- The setting leader contacts Ofsted and 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 usually advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the setting.
- Staff return to the setting with the remaining children, maintaining ratios.
- 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 chairperson and reports the incident, if possible the chairperson should come to the setting immediately. If the chairperson is unavailable the Vice Chairperson should be contacted, or failing that another committee member. The chairperson, with the management committee, carries out an investigation, as to the causes of the incident and what action can be taken to prevent any recurrence.
- The setting leader, or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.
- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- 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 who attended the outing.
- The Child's 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 and steps are put into place to ensure it cannot happen again.
- 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 are to be informed of incident within 14 days regardless of outcome.
- 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 Setting leader 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 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 by Tamar Valley Pre-school at a meeting held on.....

Signed on behalf of the committee(chairperson)

.....(committee member)