



## ***Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection***

*Providers must have and implement a policy and procedures to safeguard children*

### **1.5 Missing child**

#### **Policy statement**

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our outings procedure and our 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.

#### **Child going missing on the premises**

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the key person/staff alerts the Responsible person (Manager or Assistant Manager).
- The Responsible Person will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- The Responsible Person calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.
- A head count and the register is taken 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.
- The Responsible Person talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Responsible Person contacts the Chair of the Committee and reports the incident. The Chair of the Committee will make their way to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation.

#### **Child going missing on an outing**

This describes what to do when staff have taken a group of children on an outing.

- 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 venue staff are notified.
- The Responsible Person (Manager/Assistant Manager) who is supernumerary contacts the Chair of Committee to inform them of the incident and for them to log the incident
- The Chair of the Committee contacts the police and reports the child missing.
- The Responsible Person contacts the parent, who will be asked to make their way to the venue and stay at the venue to wait for parents.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting if transport is available or within walking distance.
- The Chair of the Committee will make their way to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation.

## **Preventative measures taken**

### *On site*

- A safety check is carried out each morning including checking access, gates are locked and the rear door is locked.
- A head count and register are taken at the beginning of every session.
- The number of children and adults are recorded on the white board and updated with any change. Visitors are also recorded on the white board
- The register is to be amended every time a child enters or leaves the setting.
- Children only leave the setting with parents or an authorised person known to the setting.
- A password system is in place if a person collecting a child is not pre-authorised.

### *Off site*

*See 'Outings' policy*

## **The investigation**

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- Our Chair carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.
- Our manager, together with a representative of our management team speaks with the parent(s) and explains the process of the investigation.
- The parent(s) may also raise a complaint with us or Ofsted.
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:
  - The date and time of the incident.

- Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.
  - Which staff/children were in the premises/on the outing and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.
  - When the child was last seen in the premises/or on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
  - What has taken place in the premises or on the outing since the child went missing.
  - The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
  - If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
  - In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted are advised.
  - 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.
- Our 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.
- They may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Our manager ensures that any 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 our staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at our manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff one of whom is our manager and the other should be our chair or another representative of the management committee. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against our 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. Our 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, our staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this

will be a very difficult time. Our chair will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

- Our staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

***This policy was adopted at a meeting of Pirton Pre-School Committee.***

Held on (date)	
Signed on behalf of the Management Committee / Proprietor	
Role of signatory (e.g. chairperson)	