

Lost Child Procedure



1. If a child goes missing from the setting

- The person in charge will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden, having calmly alerted other staff members to the fact that a child appears to be missing.
- All staff members searching for the child will keep a mobile phone with them to ensure that they are in contact at all times.
- Staff will ensure that the proper ratios are preserved at the Nursery whilst the search is undertaken.
- 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.
- The person in charge talks to staff to establish what happened
- If the child is not found the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police by the person in charge.

2. If a child goes missing from an outing where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the setting ensures that there is a procedure that is followed.

- 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 person in charge is informed, if she is not on the outing, and makes her way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff.

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- The person in charge of the setting contacts the child's parent who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the person in charge.
- The staff contact the police using the mobile phone and report the child as missing.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- 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 person in charge contacts the chairperson of the management committee who comes down to the setting as soon as possible.

When the Child is Found

- The child will be checked to see if there are any injuries.
- The risk assessment policy will be adapted to cover any issues that have become evident as a result of the incident.
- If the child is unwilling to return to the setting this needs to be addressed and the parents spoken to so as to address any general concerns.

The investigation

- The management committee chairperson carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were on the outing.
- The key person/ staff writes an incident report detailing:
 - the date and time of the report;
 - what staff/ children were in the group/outing;

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- when the child was last seen in the group/outing;
- what has taken place in the group/outing since then; and
- 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. Social Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements and is recorded in the incident book; the local authority health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- OFSTED is informed immediately by phone about the incident and its outcome.
- The Insurance Department at the Pre-School Learning Alliance is informed.