

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

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

### **November 2018**

#### **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.

##### **Background**

All children attending Pre-school are signed in on the Arrival Register by their parent/carer. Children and any adult staying on the premises are formally recorded by the supervisor, marking their presence in the main attendance register.

Children are their parents/carers responsibility until they are signed in and they are again parents/carers responsibility once signed out and collected from the staff.

While parents/carers are delivering a child to pre-school or collecting a child from pre-school, any additional children accompanying the adults are solely their responsibility and must remain with their parent/carer at all times.

##### **Procedures**

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

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the child's key person alerts our setting supervisor.
- The time will be recorded on the register and all the children will be assembled in the Woodcote room. The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Our supervisor will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- 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, our supervisor calls the police immediately and reports the child as missing. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this.
- The parent(s) are then called and informed.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- Our supervisor talks to our staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- Our supervisor contacts our chair and reports the incident. Our chair comes to the provision immediately to carry out an investigation.

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

This describes what to do when our staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving our supervisor and/or other staff back in our setting premises. If our supervisor has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. What to do when a child goes missing from a whole group outing may be a little different, as parents usually attend and are responsible for their own child.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members 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.
- Our senior staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports that child as missing.
- Our supervisor is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- Our supervisor contacts the parent(s).
- Our staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff, or our supervisor where applicable, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- Our manager contacts our chair and reports the incident. Our chair comes to our premises immediately to carry out an investigation, with our management team (where appropriate).
- Our staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

#### *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 supervisor, 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.

