

Missing Child Policy

It is our intention to maintain the safety of babies and children as the highest priority at all times both on and off the premises. All staff who work with the children understand their responsibility to help keep the children safe at all times; this is done by meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We assess the risks or hazards that may arise for children and identify steps to remove, minimise and manage those risks and hazards. This includes the consideration of adult to child ratios and carrying out regular head counts of children throughout outings or visits.

In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

If a child goes missing from the setting the following actions will be carried out:

- The person in charge will carry out a thorough search of the setting
- The register will be taken to ensure all other children are present
- Doors and gates will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security
- The person in charge will talk to the staff to establish what happened
- The person in charge will sensitively talk to the children to establish what happened
- Providing there is adequate supervision for the other children, some staff members may be able to search the nearby vicinity. They will take with them a mobile phone to ensure they are contactable
- If the child is found, they will be supported as comforted as necessary
- If the child is found parents/carers will be informed at the latest when the child is collected that day. The situation will be explained and what will be put into place to prevent this from recurring.
- If the child is not found, the person in charge will ring the police, provide details and follow their advice. A clear record will be made of the circumstances surrounding the disappearance in order to help the police as much as possible with their investigation
- The parents will be contacted to let them know the situation
- All staff will support and reassure the other children

If a child goes missing when away from the setting (e.g. from an outing) where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the following actions will be carried out:

- Children will stand with their designated person, and a headcount will be taken to ensure all other children are present
- The lead staff member will organise a search the immediate vicinity

- If the child is not found then the lead staff member will contact the venue's security and ask for assistance in searching for the missing child
- If the child is found they will be supported as comforted as necessary
- If the child is found parents/carers will be informed at the latest when the child is collected that day. The situation will be explained and what will be put into place to prevent this from recurring
- If the child is not found, the lead staff member will ring the police, provide details and follow their advice. A clear record will be made of the circumstances surrounding the disappearance in order to help the police as much as possible with their investigation
- The lead staff member will inform the person in charge of the setting, if they are not with the group
- The person in charge of the setting will contact the child's parents
- Some staff will continue to search for the child whilst ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the other children is maintained
- Staff will take the other children back to the setting
- In the unlikely event the child is not found by the staff/police the setting will follow the local authority and police procedure

The investigation:

- The setting leader will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff and any volunteers who were present at the time
- The setting leader will speak with the parents and explain the process of the investigation.
- Each staff member and any volunteers who were present will write an incident report detailing:
 - the date and time of the incident
 - what staff/children were present
 - when the child was last seen the including the time it is estimated that the child went missing
 - what subsequent actions were taken
 - a conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened
 - children's comments are also noted if applicable
- 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 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 will be informed within 14 days
- The Local Children's Safeguarding Partnership will be informed
- North Somerset Early Years Team will be contacted for advice and support

Insert setting name and/or logo here

- The incident will be reported under RIDDOR if it is deemed necessary
- Our insurance company will be informed
- A decision will be made as to whether staff disciplinary processes need to be followed
- As a result of the investigation: risk assessments, policies and procedures will be updated, and all staff and families will be made aware of the changes made
- The parents of the child involved will be given information about the investigation (whilst maintaining confidentiality of any staff members and other children)
- Staff will not discuss any missing child incident with the press or any other person outside of the school. Confidentiality will be upheld at all times
- With incidents of this nature parents, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary

Policy Date:

Signed:

Review Date: