

**General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children’s Welfare**

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



**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 outing’s 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.

**7 Key features of effective practice**

The best for every child	High quality care	The Curriculum	Pedagogy	Assessment	Self-regulation and executive function	Partnership with Parents
<a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007446/6.7534_DfE_Development_Matters_Report_and_illustrations_web_2_.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007446/6.7534_DfE_Development_Matters_Report_and_illustrations_web_2_.pdf</a>						

**Procedures:**

**Child going missing in the setting:**

What to do when a child goes missing from the setting:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the manager is alerted.
- The manager will carry out a quick search of the building and outside decked area.
- 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 within 3 minutes, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police, by the manager.
- The manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The manager allocates a member of staff to keep looking for the missing child.
- The manager contacts the Chair of Directors and reports the incident. The Chair of Directors carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

**Child going missing on an outing:**

What to do when a child goes missing from a whole setting outing:

- We record a photograph of all children on an iPad before they go out in order to be able to give details of the clothing they were wearing to the Police or anyone searching for them.
- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand still 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 manager is contacted immediately, and the incident is reported or if the setting leader is present, they will contact the police and report child as missing.
- The manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the setting leader. The setting is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the setting.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting and one adult will stay in the vicinity of the area and will continue searching the immediate area (with a mobile phone) where the child was last seen in case the child returns. The setting leader will call them once the police have taken over the search.
- 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 chair of Directors and reports the incident. The chair of Directors, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.
- The setting leader, or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

In the case where parents have attended an outing and are responsible for their own child for example a Leavers trip. Under these circumstances, the parent would search for their missing child and the staff would provide back-up help and where necessary and would contact the police whilst the parent continues to search.

### **The investigation**

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The setting leader together with the chair or representative of Directors speaks with the parent(s).
- The chairperson and Board of Directors carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
  - The date and time of the report.
  - What staff/children were in the group/outing.
  - 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.
- 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 is informed as soon as possible but always within 14 days. The SPOA should also be informed.
- 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 manager 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 manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the manager and

the other should be the chair of Directors or representative of the Directors. 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 chair of Directors will use their discretion to decide what action to take whilst adhering to legislation.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This Policy was reviewed by	Shereen Milledge
Adopted by	Rotherfield Pre-School Staff and Directors
Date	November 2022
Review Date	November 2023

#### Review Log

Review Date	Brief Details of Amendments	Amended By	Agreed By
May 2021	None required	Sandra Cawsey	Rotherfield Pre-School Staff & Directors
November 2022	None required	Sdra Cawsey	Rotherfield Pre-School Staff & Directors