



Brenchley Preschool

Lost Child Policy

Statement of Intent

All safety checks are carried out before sessions start and at regular intervals throughout the session, to ensure the setting is safe and secure. Doors to building are locked and kept shut at all times except opening and closing times (See Health & Safety Policy).

Aim

Our aim is to ensure that in the unlikely event that the whereabouts of a child is unknown, that the appropriate steps are taken to locate the child as quickly as possible.

Methods

Find Out Quickly

The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is quickly discovered. When the register is taken, the number of children is written on a board so all members of staff know how many children in a session.

All Staff must make regular head counts, especially when moving the children from one play area to another.

Search Systematically

We ensure we always have correct child/adult ratios.

- Children aged two – at least one member of staff for every four children
- Children aged three and over – at least one member of staff for every eight children.

We do have two members of staff who has obtained the Early Years Teaching Status and according to the Welfare Standards of the EYFS (2023), ratios can be legally obtained with at least one member of staff for 13 children with an additional member of staff for every eight. However, this ratio is deemed by the preschool as insufficient and will not be undertaking this unless emergencies deem it necessary.

In an emergency, some adults will be freed to respond to the new situation without neglecting the needs of the other children. To remember the safety of the other children with regards to both supervision and safety, the children will be gathered in the Rainbows Room.

It will be established who last saw the child and what they were doing. The Rainbows and Teddies Class and the outside garden area, will be checked by the Health & Safety Officer

The Health & Safety Officer will leave Brenchley Pre-School and check the roads to the left and Staff Member 2 check the roads to the right, both will hold mobile phones.

If the child has not been found within 15 minutes, the Manager will telephone the Parents and the Police to inform them of the situation.

The Health & Safety Officer will continue to search the surrounding areas.

Parents

The child's parents will be called, alarming them as little as possible. The parents will need advice and support as soon as they are informed.

The Police

If the above steps have not located the child, the Police will be called. They have the resources to conduct a search, as speed is important.

Informing Other People

Parents will be reminded regularly, to inform the Preschool if there are any changes in the emergency contact numbers they have provided, so that details can be kept up-to-date. If the Police have been called, Safeguarding and Social Services must also be informed. The Social Services department will want to conduct their own investigation and will need to know -

- What systems we operate for preventing such occurrences.
- What happened.
- What we did, at what time and in what order.
- Who we informed and when.

The Chairperson will need to be informed as soon as possible.

Accident & Incident Book

A record of events will be logged. This is important, even if, as is likely, the child is found safe within a few minutes. The record will include the last positive sighting of the child and anything unusual that day, about the behaviour of the child or of any other children.

Dealing with People's Reactions

The child's parents will be distressed. These feelings are natural and because powerful emotions are involved, people's behaviour can be unpredictable.

It is important to be very careful from the beginning, about the words we use to talk to people about the incident.

Informing Other Parents

Other parents will be given information when appropriate explaining what happened and what we have learnt from the event, in order to ensure that it does not happen again.

When the situation has been resolved, members of staff should review the reasons for it happening, and ensure measures are taken to ensure that it does not happen again.

The incident should be reported to Ofsted and recorded in our Incident Book.

This Policy was reviewed at a Management Meeting held on 1st September 2025.



.....
Mrs Victoria Relle – Chairman of Brenchley Preschool