

Missing Child Protocol

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WoodlandAnnemal

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**Woodland
Annemal**

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Missing Child Protocol

Missing Child Policy – WoodlandAnnemal

At **WoodlandAnnemal**, the safety and well-being of every child attending our Forest School and alternative provision sessions is our highest priority. We recognise that, despite best efforts, there is a possibility that a child may go missing during an activity, particularly given the variety of locations we work in — including woodlands, school sites, children’s homes, and wider community spaces.

This policy outlines the proactive steps we take to prevent such incidents, and the immediate procedures we follow in the unlikely event that a child goes missing.

Preventative Measures

- **Regular Headcounts:** Staff conduct frequent headcounts, especially during transitions (e.g., walking to and from sites), before, during, and after activities.
- **Clear Boundaries:** Children are briefed at the start of each session about site boundaries, safety rules, and what to do if they feel lost or unsure.
- **Staff Vigilance:** Staff are strategically positioned to maintain clear lines of sight and always ensure adequate supervision.
- **Site Risk Assessments:** Thorough risk assessments are carried out prior to each session, including escape points, high-risk zones, and emergency contact procedures.

Procedure if a Child Goes Missing

In the event that a child is unaccounted for, the following actions will be taken immediately:

1. Raise the Alert:

- a. All staff will be informed, and an immediate sweep of the site and surrounding area will begin.
- b. One staff member will take responsibility for coordinating the search while another remains with the rest of the group.

2. Search and Secure:

- a. The team will thoroughly check all areas of the site, including hiding places, toilets, shelters, vehicles, and access routes.
- b. Remaining children will be kept safe and reassured to minimise distress.

3. Notify Emergency Services and Parents/Carers:

- a. If the child is not found within a short, designated timeframe (typically 5–10 minutes), the police will be contacted via 999.
- b. The session leader will notify the child's parents or carers as soon as possible.

4. Ongoing Coordination:

- a. While waiting for emergency services and the child's family, the search will continue, and the site leader will coordinate with all involved parties.
- b. Staff will provide any relevant information to the police, including the child's description, last known location, and any medical or behavioural needs.

5. Maintain Normality:

- a. Staff will do their best to maintain a calm environment for the remaining children, ensuring their emotional safety is also prioritised.

Post-Incident Procedure

- A detailed incident report will be completed by the DSL and session leader.
- A full internal review will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the response.
- Relevant risk assessments, staff training, and procedures will be updated where necessary to prevent recurrence.

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- The incident will be reported to the relevant authorities and safeguarding bodies (e.g. Ofsted, LADO) where appropriate.

At **WoodlandAnnemal**, we are committed to fostering a safe, secure, and supportive environment where children can learn, explore, and thrive. Our Missing Child Policy forms part of our wider safeguarding framework and is reviewed regularly to ensure best practice is maintained.