



# Lost child procedure

Written in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2025):  
Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Safety and suitability of premises, environment, and equipment

Safety on outings

**3.89** Children must be kept safe while on outings. Providers must assess potential risks or hazards for the children and must identify the steps to be taken to remove, minimise and manage those risks and hazards. The assessment must include consideration of staff to child ratios. The risk assessment does not necessarily need to be in writing; this is up to providers.

At Little Squirrels nursery the safety and wellbeing of all children in our care is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. We have robust systems and procedures in place to significantly reduce the likelihood of a child going missing or becoming lost. These are embedded within staff training and are monitored regularly.

#### The measures we have on place to prevent a lost child.

To minimise the risk of a child going missing, we:

- ♥ Always supervise children attentively, maintaining sight and sound monitoring.
- ♥ Maintain appropriate staff-to-child ratios at all times.
- ♥ Complete risk assessments twice daily in all areas where children play.
- ♥ Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment prior to any trip or outing.
- ♥ Sign children in and out when they leave or return to the building (including trips to the garden), with emergency contact details taken on every outing.
- ♥ Ensure that all visitors are signed in and closely supervised at all times.
- ♥ Train staff to be vigilant and to act swiftly and calmly in any situation.

With consistent and careful planning, children should never be out of sight of a trusted adult.

#### Missing child – From nursery

In the unlikely event that a child is missing within the nursery:

1. Alert the Manager/deputy immediately.
2. A thorough search of the entire premises, garden, and immediate surroundings will be conducted by available staff.
3. Check the register sheets to confirm if the child has already been collected.
4. Ensure all doors, gates, and access points are secured and check for possible openings.
5. If the child is not found within **10 minutes**, the police (999) and the child's parents/carers will be contacted immediately.
6. Continue the search under the guidance of emergency services.

#### Missing child – On an outing

If a child becomes separated from the group while out of nursery:

1. Alert all staff and conduct an immediate headcount to ensure no other child is missing.
2. One staff member will search the immediate area while the rest of the group remains supervised.
3. Call 999 and provide:
  - ♥ Your name and location
  - ♥ A description of the child/what they were wearing
  - ♥ The child's name, DOB, and any medical needs

- ♥ Name of the nursery and manager contact
- 4. Notify the Nursery Manager immediately, if not present.
- 5. The Manager or Deputy will:
  - ♥ Go directly to the scene
  - ♥ Inform the venue or premises management
  - ♥ Contact the child's parents/carers
- 6. Staff will return the remaining children to the nursery.
- 7. A senior member of staff will stay at the scene to liaise with police/emergency services.
- 8. All staff involved will complete written reports documenting the incident.
- 9. Ofsted will be notified of the incident as soon as possible.

After the child is found and safe:

- ♥ The Nursery Manager will speak with the child's parents.
- ♥ A full internal investigation will be launched immediately.
- ♥ Written statements will be taken from all staff present.
- ♥ An incident report will be created, detailing:
  - Date and time
  - Staff and children present
  - Time and location the child was last seen
  - Timeline of the incident
  - How the child was found or recovered
  - Conclusions and actions taken to prevent reoccurrence
- ♥ The insurance provider will be notified as required.

Support for people involved

Missing child incidents are distressing. Staff involved may feel responsible or overwhelmed. The Nursery Manager will:

- ♥ Offer emotional support and reassurance.
- ♥ Ensure staff wellbeing is prioritised throughout and after the investigation.

Managing Parents/Carers:

- ♥ We understand that parents may be anxious or upset. We will provide full transparency and support.
- ♥ However, aggressive or threatening behaviour toward staff will not be tolerated.

Supporting Other Children:

- ♥ Children will be kept calm and reassured.
- ♥ Staff will answer any questions honestly but age-appropriately.
- ♥ The incident will not be discussed in front of the children unnecessarily.

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if an incident occurs, or guidance is updated.

Policy updated by Kylie Jones and the Little Squirrels team **May 2026**.