



06 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults procedures

06.05 Missing child

In the building

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the member of staff informs the leader who initiates a search within the setting. This will include:
 - Checking doors for a potential breach of security
 - All rooms in the building
 - Toilets
 - Cloakrooms, including behind coats
 - Garden area
 - Sheds and other storage
 - In and around garden play equipment
 - All indoor cupboards
 - Under seating, under counter areas
 - The lobby area
- If the child is found on-site, the designated person checks on the welfare of the child and investigates the circumstances of the incident.
- If the child is not found on site, one member of staff searches the immediate vicinity, if there is no sign of the child, the police are called immediately.
- The parents are then called and informed.
- The designated person contacts their designated officer, to inform them of the situation and seek assistance.

Off-site (outing or walk)

This details our procedure for small group outings where the manager and/or other staff remain at the setting premises. If the manager has accompanied the children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. Our actions when a child goes missing on a whole group outing may differ as parent helpers will also attend and are responsible for their own child.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the children are asked to stay with their designated carer and the senior staff member present carries out a headcount.
- One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity, but does not search beyond that.
- If the child is not found, the senior staff member calls the police and then contacts the designated person or manager (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded
- The designated person or manager informs the parents.



- Members of staff return the children to the setting as soon as possible if it is safe to do so. According to the advice of the police, one senior member of staff should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The designated person contacts the designated officer, who attends the setting.
- Our staff remain calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible (and at least within 14 days).
- The designated officer carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.
- The designated person and the designated officer speak with the parents together and explains the process of the investigation
- The parent(s) may raise a complaint with us or Ofsted.
- Each member of staff present during the incident writes a full report detailing:
 - Date and time of the incident
 - Where the child went missing, e.g the setting or an outing venue
 - Which staff/children were in the premises/on the outing and the name of the staff member who was responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the premises or on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - What has taken place in the premises or on the outing since the child went missing.
 - The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.

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.
- Our 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.
- They may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Our manager will ensure that any staff under investigation are not only treated fairly, but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry and distraught. They may want to blame our 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 which is the



manager and the other should be our director. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against our 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. Our 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 the children's questions honestly, but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, our staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. Our director will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Our staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.