

## Missing Child Policy

**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 outings procedures and the exit/entrance procedures 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.

### EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.3. Keeping safe 1.4 Health and well-being	2.2 Parents as partners	3.4 the wider context.	

### Procedures

#### Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the pre-school leader.
- The pre-school leader will carry out a thorough search of the building and outdoor play 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, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.
- The nominated staff Karen Westcott and Miss Greenwood or Mrs. Blackburn will search the immediate area, taking with them their personal mobile phones.
- Miss Greenwood - the child's name will be called throughout - reading room, ramp, back of village hall, scan up untreated road and Club Row, snicket, post office, scan Main Street and Tweedy Street then telephone our office with findings.

- Mrs Wescott - calling name, up main stairs, top door, car park, playground, scan North View and up Royd Street, Co-op, scan Main Street then telephone our office with findings.
- Mrs Sharp will remain on the premises and be responsible for all telephone calls, liaising between the members of staff out looking and keep records of how incident is dealt with including times of events.
- The pre-school leader will talk to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The pre-school leader contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the management committee carried out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

#### Child going missing on an outing

If a child goes missing from an outing where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, we follow the following procedure:-

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing will ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member will search the immediate vicinity but will not search beyond that.
- The pre-school leader is contacted immediately and the incident is reported (if leader is not on the outing).
- The pre-school leader contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The pre-school leader contacts the parents, advises them to make their way to the pre-school or outing venue as appropriate.
- If appropriate the staff will take the remaining children back to the setting.
- 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 pre-school leader contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the management committee, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

The pre-school leader, or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

## The Investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The pre-school leader together with the chairperson or representative from the management committee speaks to the parent(s).
- The Committee Chairperson and management committee carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were on the outing.
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
  1. The date and time of the report
  2. What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
  3. When the child was last seen in the group/outing
  4. What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing
  5. The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion will be drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will 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 will be reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents booklet). The local authority health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

## Managing people

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. The pre-school staff will try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The designated key person or carer who was responsible for the child at the time may feel worried, anxious, distressed and may proportion blame onto themselves. The pre-school will endeavour to comfort and support this person.
- Staff may be the target of parental anger and may be afraid. The pre-school will endeavour to keep the staff/carers under investigation fairly treated and 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 another; they may direct their anger at the pre-school leader. When dealing with distraught and angry parents will ensure that two members of staff, one of whom is the pre-school leader and the other the chairperson or representative of the management committee. No matter how understandable the parent's anger maybe, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated and the police will 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 will be focused on their needs and will not discuss the incident in front of them. They will 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 chairperson and pre-school leader will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff will not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.
- Staff will not discuss the incident with other parents or carers.

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of Wilsden Pre-school**

**Held on .....**

**Signed on behalf of the management committee .....**

Revised October 2009