

## **Missing Child Policy**

### Safeguarding Children

#### 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 procedure and the exit/entrance procedure 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.

#### Procedures

### **1. Child going missing on the premises**

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the senior leader.
- The senior member of staff calls the police and reports the child missing and then calls the parent.
- The senior member of staff will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- 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.
- The setting leader talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The senior leader contacts the Chief Executive Officer and reports the incident to the Chair. The CEO and or Chairperson, with the Senior leadership team, carries out an investigation.
- The CEO will issue a short statement in relation to the incident in conjunction with the police.

### **2. Child going missing on an outing**

This describes what to do when staff members have taken a group on an outing, leaving the senior leader and/or other staff back in the setting. If the senior Leader has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

What to do when a child goes missing from a whole setting outing may be a little different, as parents usually attend and are responsible for their own child.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing 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 searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The most senior member of staff on duty at the time of the incident are contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- The senior staff member contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The senior staff member contacts the parent, and agrees the best place to meet. (The setting is advised as best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the centre).
- Staff members take the remaining children back to the setting.
- In an indoor venue, the staff members contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The senior staff member, or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.
- The senior staff member informs the Chief Executive Officer. The CEO, and SLT carries out an investigation.

### **3. The investigation**

- The Chief Executive Officer and SLT, carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the area or who were on the outing.
- The key person/staff member writes a **Missing Child Incident Report** detailing
  - a. The date and time of the report.
  - b. What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.

- c. When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
- d. What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
- e. The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened and whether the incident warrants a police investigation.
- Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences) arrangements; 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.

#### **4. Managing people**

- Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The remaining staff caring for the children need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them. There should always be two members of staff present who are members of SLT/CEO when handling the situation with parents of a missing child.
- Parents of the other children should be informed of any incident involving a missing child by a member of the SLT or CEO.
- Staff may feel vulnerable during this process and will need support.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support.
- Members of staff, volunteers and Trustees must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without permission from the Chief Executive Officer or Chair Person who will have taken appropriate advice before appointing a spokesperson for the organisation.

Policy Name	Missing Child Policy
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Version Number	V2
This policy was developed by	Governance and Accountability Sub Group
These people were consulted/ involved in developing the policy	Safeguarding Team
This Policy was adopted by	Trustee Board
Date	March 2018
Signed	
Name	James Wragg
Role	Chairperson
Next Review Date	March 2019