

Missing Child Policy

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Great care will be taken to ensure that this policy does not need to be enforced.

In the event of a child going missing on the premises the following action should be taken:

- The manager must be informed immediately, who will ensure all staff are aware.
- A thorough search of the nursery will take place, followed by a search of the surrounding area.
- Ensure all other children remain supervised, calm and supported.
- Check doors and gates to see if there has been a breach of security where a child could wander out.
- Carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- The manager will carry out a second search of the area
- If the above steps do not locate the child, the parent / carer and the police must be informed.
- The manager will meet the police and parents.

In the event of a child going missing during an outing, the following action should be taken:

- Inform the member of staff in charge immediately who will establish where the child was last seen and alert every one of the situation.
- Carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- A thorough search of the area should be carried out.
- A member of staff must retrace their steps back to the last meeting point.
- If appropriate, on-site security will also be informed and a description given
- If the above steps do not locate the child, the parents/carers and the police must be informed.
- During this period, staff will be continually searching for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain the safety and welfare of the remaining children.
- Staff from the nursery will be sent to assist the safe return of the other children where appropriate
- At least one member of staff will remain at the scene whilst others return to the nursery with the children. This member of staff will continue searching.
- The remaining member of staff will meet the police and parents when they arrive at a designated point.

In both instances children will be sensitive to what is going on around them and may be worried. The 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 children's questions honestly but also reassure them.

With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience, management will provide this. The nursery manager needs to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable. Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

Investigating the incident

A full investigation will take place with written statements taken from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing. The nursery manager together with a representative from Colyton Caterpillars will speak with the parent / carers.

An incident report will be written detailing:

- The date and time of the report.
- What staff/children were in the group and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
- When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
- What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
- The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- Risk assessments will be reviewed following any incident of this nature.

If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will co-operate fully. Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

After the incident

Any incidents must be recorded in writing as soon as practicably possible.

The following people must be informed:

- Ofsted – 0300 123 1231
- RIDDOR -www.hse.gov.uk/riddor 0845 300 9923
- The insurance provider.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the setting on (date).....

Signed on behalf of the setting.....