

MISSING CHILD POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR WHIZZ KIDS PRE-SCHOOL

Policy

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off our 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

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts our pre-school manager.
- Our pre-school manager calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent/carer.
- Our pre-school manager will carry out a thorough search of the premises both inside and out.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- All doors are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- Our pre-school manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The pre-school management carry out an immediate investigation.

Child going missing on an outing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask all the children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The pre-school manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The pre-school manager contacts the parent/carer, who makes their way to the pre-school.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the pre-school.
- 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 management carry out an immediate investigation.
- The pre-school manager, or a member of staff may be advised by the police to stay at the venue while the investigation is being carried out.
- The key person/staff member writes an occurrence 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. Where 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 is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing the staff. 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 arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); 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. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The 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.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The pre-school management need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but 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 others; they may direct their anger at the pre-school manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the pre-school manager and the other should be part of the management. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against 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. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focussed on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should 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 pre-school manager will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This policy and its procedures was adopted at a meeting between Mrs Terina Wilkinson and Mrs Sara Ward on 26th November 2019 and will be reviewed annually or sooner if necessary.

Signed by

Mrs Terina Wilkinson

Room 1 Manager

And

Mrs Sara Ward

Room 2 Manager