



Missing child

Policy statement

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our outings procedure and our 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 as follows:-

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, [the relevant member of staff] alerts our setting manager.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Our Deputy Manager (if manager is not on site) will carry out a thorough search of the building/garden/school grounds.
- 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, our manager/deputy calls the police immediately and reports the child as missing. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this.
- The parent(s) are then called and informed.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- Our manager/deputy talks to our staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- Our manager contacts our chair or a director if the chair is unavailable and reports the incident. Our chair\director comes to the provision immediately to carry out an investigation.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when our staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving our manager and/or other staff back in our premises. If our manager has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. What to do when a child goes missing from a whole group 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, the staff members on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer 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.
- Our senior staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports that the child is missing.

- Our manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- Our manager contacts the parent(s).
- Our staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff, or our manager where applicable, 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.
- Our manager contacts our chair/director and reports the incident. Our chair\director comes to our premises immediately to carry out an investigation, with our management team.
- Our staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation **0300 123 3155**
- Our chair/director carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.
- Our manager, together with a representative of our management team speaks with the parent(s) and explains the process of the investigation.
- The parent(s) may also raise a complaint with us or Ofsted.
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the incident.
 - Where the child went missing from 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 designated as 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.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted are advised.
- 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.

- 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 ensures that any 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 our staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at our manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff one of whom is our manager and the other should be our chair or another representative of the management committee. 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 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 chair 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.
- Risk assessments (missing child) must be up to date and reviewed on a regular basis.

Uncollected Child

Policy statement

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult by their expected collection time, we put into practice agreed procedures. The child will receive a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible.

We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.

Procedures

- Parents are asked to provide the following specific information when their child starts attending our setting, which is recorded on our Registration Form:
- Home address and telephone number of the person/s that has parental responsibility of the child, and or where there is a third party involved with parental responsibility- if the parents do not have a telephone, an alternative number must be given, perhaps a close neighbour or close relative.

- Place of work, and telephone number.
- Mobile telephone number.
- Names, addresses, telephone numbers and signatures of adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the setting, for example a childminder or relatives. (over 18 years to be able to collect a child, unless special circumstances require 16yrs or above)
- Who has parental responsibility for the child.
- Full detailed birth certificate (form of ID of child & proof of legal guardianship).
- Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child.
- On occasions when parents are aware that they will not be at home or in their usual place of work, or away for a period of time they inform us in writing of how they can be contacted.
- On occasions when parents, or the persons normally authorised to collect the child, are not able to collect the child, they provide us with written details of the name, address and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child. We agree with parents how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child. (password/photo/description)
- Parents are informed that if they are not able to collect their child as planned, they must inform us so that we can begin to take back-up measures. Our contact telephone number is **01455 208375** or **07920837659**.
- If a child is not collected at their expected collection time, we follow the procedures below:
 - The child's file is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
 - If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or at work.
 - If this is unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child - and whose telephone numbers are recorded on the Registration Form - are contacted.
 - All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or nominated carers.
 - The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.
- If no-one collects the child within **30 minutes** of their expected collection time and there is **no named contact** who can be contacted to collect the child, we apply the procedures for uncollected children.
- If we have any cause to believe the child has been abandoned, we contact the local authority children's social care team:

If the children's social care team is unavailable [or as our local authority advise] we will contact the local police.

Social Care – (duty & advice) 0116 454 1004

Police 101

- After an additional 15 minutes if the child has not been collected, we will contact the above statutory agencies again.
- The child stays at the setting in the care of two of our fully-vetted workers, one of whom will be our manager or deputy manager until the child is safely collected either by the parents or by a social care worker, or by another person specified by social care.
- Social care will aim to find the parent or relative. If they are unable to do so, the child will become looked after by the local authority.
- Under no circumstances will we go to look for the parent, nor leave the setting premises with the child.
- We ensure that the child is not anxious and we do not discuss our concerns in front of them.
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child’s file.
- Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked.
- Ofsted may be informed: **0300 1231231**
- The local Early Years Alliance office/Development Worker may also be informed: **0207 697 2500/2595**

Further information

- Safeguarding Children (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2013)

I have read & understood the missing and uncollected child policy adapted by Ullesthorpe Pre-School and understand that Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff & committee members.

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| This policy was adopted by: Ullesthorpe Pre-school | | | |
| On | 5 th May 2021 | Date to be reviewed: | April 2022 |
| Signed on behalf of the provider | | Name of signatory | |
| Role of signatory (e.g., chair/director) | | | |
| Designation | Name | Signature | Date |
| Manager | | | |
| Deputy Manager | | | |
| Nursery Nurse | | | |
| Nursery Nurse | | | |

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| Secretary | | | |
| Treasurer | | | |
| Member | | | |
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