



LOST OR MISSING CHILD

Purpose

In the unlikely event of a child going missing from within/from the nursery or while on an outing, the following procedures will be implemented immediately.

Policy

LOST CHILD PROCEDURE (FROM SETTING)

- The Nursery Manager will be informed immediately, and all staff present will be informed and deployed to start an immediate thorough search of the nursery.
- if the child has still not been accounted for, the Manager will contact the police.
- the Manager will also contact the parents/carers of the missing child.
- during this period, staff will be continually searching for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain as normal a routine as possible for the rest of the children in the nursery.
- the Manager will meet the police and parents/carers.
- the Manager will then await instructions from the police.
- any incidents must be recorded in writing using the [Incident Report](#)
- Ofsted must be contacted and informed of any incidents.
- with incidents of this nature parents, carers and children may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience.

LOST CHILD PROCEDURE (ON OUTINGS)

Every 10 minutes head counts are carried out on children throughout the outing and Risk Assessments are carried out or reviewed before each outing commences.

- the organiser will be informed immediately, and all staff present will be informed and deployed to start an immediate thorough search of the area, ensuring that all other children remain supervised throughout.
- in the event of a child not being found, the designated person in charge will immediately inform the police.
- the designated person in charge will then inform the nursery who will contact the child's parents/carers giving details of what has happened. In the case of the whole nursery being on an outing, all parent's/carers details would be taken on the trip by the person in charge.
- staff from the nursery will be sent to assist in the safe return of the other children.
- during this period, staff will be continually searching for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain the safety of the remaining children.
- 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 for the child/children.
- the remaining member of staff will meet the police and parents/carers when they arrive at a designated point.
- any incidents must be recorded in writing using the [Incident Report](#)
- Ofsted must be contacted and informed of any incidents.



- with incidents of this nature parents, carers and children may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience.

Informing other people:

We will ensure that:

- we make regular checks to ensure that if an incident of this sort does happen, we will have all the necessary phone numbers at hand –correct, up-to-date and kept together.
- if the police are called, the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board and Ofsted are informed.
- if the Manager is not on the premises, she/he will be informed as soon as possible, as will the Area Manager.
- we will provide the following information to Ofsted/LSCB
 - a) what happened?
 - b) what systems are in place for preventing such occurrences?
 - c) what we did do, at what time and in what order?
 - d) who have we informed and when?

We will co-operate fully in any investigation.

Dealing with people’s reactions

We accept that the children’s parents will be frightened, distressed, and angry. If the setting shares all the policies with parents/carers, the situation will be easier for all because there will be an understanding of working within a framework of mutual trust and understanding.

We accept that in such circumstances powerful emotions are involved, and people’s behaviour can be unpredictable. Those who seem quite calm about the incident at the time can later become angry, threaten legal action, or approach the local press.

We will be clear about the circumstances surrounding the incident and will respond sympathetically to questions without implications or admission of responsibility. Responses may include:

- how sorry you are that the incident happened
- that a full investigation is in hand
- that Ofsted/LSCB have been informed and will be investigating

Dealing with the media

Distressed parents may contact the local press, or reporters may hear about the incident if the police are involved. Please refer to the [Crisis Management Policy](#)

Informing other parents

We recognise that other parents will need to be given brief, accurate information as rapidly as possible. We will ensure this happens by:

- calling a short meeting when parents/carers collect children or
- talking to parents/carers when they arrive at the next session or
- sending home, a note with each child



When the child is found

We recognise that during the time the child is missing, however briefly, all involved, parents and others, suffer great fear, guilt, and distress. It is not always easy to control all these emotions when the child is found. We will accept it is important to remember:

- the child may be afraid and distressed and need comfort
- to remain calm and reassure the child, ensuring they are not hurt
- to acknowledge it may not have been the child's fault
- that the incident provides a good opportunity to talk to all the children to ensure they understand they must not leave the premises and why

After the incident

- we will review our current policy and procedures
- we will evaluate processes and make necessary adjustments to ensure future effectiveness

Associated documents

- [Crisis Management Policy](#)
- [PC Paws Guidance](#)
- [Risk Assessments](#)
- [Incident Record](#)
- [Blank Risk Assessment](#)