

Missing Child Policy

A child can be classed as missing or lost if they have been left unsupervised or unaccounted for (so staff are not aware of them being within sight or hearing) in a room or the outside area of the setting or further afield for 2 minutes or longer.

If a child goes missing from the setting the following actions will be carried out:

- The person in charge 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 person in charge talks to staff to establish what happened
- The person in charge talks to children (using wording so as not to upset the children) to establish what has happened
- If ratios allow staff members can search the nearby vicinity
- If the child is found parents/carers will be informed when the child is collected that day. The situation will be explained and what will be put into place to prevent this from recurring.
- If the child is not found, the parent is contacted, and the missing child is reported to the police • The advice of the police is followed
- All remaining children will be kept calm

The investigation:

- The Setting Leader carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were with the group.
- Each key person writes an incident report detailing:
 - ❖ the date and time of the incident and what staff/children were in the group when the child was last seen.
 - ❖ what has taken place in the group since the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - ❖ A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened
 - ❖ Children's comments are also noted if applicable
- 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 staff. Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address
- The incident is recorded in the incident book; the local authority health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution
- Ofsted is informed within 14 days as a Missing Child can be deemed a significant event.
- Our Insurance company is informed
- A decision will be made as to whether staff disciplinary processes need to be followed

- As a result of the investigation: risk assessments, policies and procedures will be updated, and all staff and families will be made aware of the changes made
- The parents/carer of the child involved will be given information about the investigation (whilst maintaining confidentiality of any staff members and other children)

Date to be reviewed: May 2027

Date amended: May 2025

Date signed off: May 2025

Signed: Wesley Brown

Signed: Kathleen Williams