



Tickton Pre-school and Play Pals, Missing Child Policy.

Working in conjunction with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (EYFS).

Quality and Consistency.

A Secure Foundation.

Partnership Working.

Equality of Opportunity.

Unique Child

Positive Partnerships

Enabling Environment

Learning and Developing

EYFS (Safeguarding children)

Policy statement

Children's safety is the highest priority at all times, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made by carrying out the outings procedure and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. Regular headcounts are carried out on children throughout outings. In the unlikely event of a child going missing whilst on an outing the following procedure will be implemented immediately.

Child/Adult ratios must always be adhered to as stated in the EYFS.

Child going missing on the premises

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the setting leader. All staff present will be informed and an immediate thorough search of the area will be made, ensuring that all other children remain supervised throughout. The setting leader will carry out a thorough search of the building and out-door area.

If the child is not found, the designated person in charge will immediately inform the police. The parent is also contacted.

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 setting leader talks to the staff team to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.

The setting leader contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the management committee, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

Ofsted must be informed and the local safeguarding board, including the local EYDA. A report must be made and given to each agency.

Child going missing on an outing.

This describes what to do when staff have taken a group on an outing, leaving the setting leader and/or other staff back in the setting. If the setting Leader has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly and they will become the lead person.

A outings risk assessment form must be completed before all outings by the designated 'lead person'.

What to do when a child goes missing from a whole setting 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, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- The setting leader talks to the staff team to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity.
- If appropriate, on-site security will also be informed and a description of the child/children given.
- If the child is not found, the designated person in charge will immediately inform the police and reports the child as missing. The parent is also contacted (as appropriate) - the designated person in charge will inform the setting who will contact the child's parents/carers - giving details of what has happened, who then makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the setting leader. The police will lead the search for a missing child the setting staff must follow their procedures. One member of staff will stay with the investigation.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- The setting leader or manager is contacted immediately and the incident is reported. The setting leader contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the management committee, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.
- Ofsted must be informed and the local safeguarding board, including the local EYDA. A report must be made and given to each agency.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The setting leader together with the chairperson or representative from the management committee, speaks with the parent(s).
- The chairperson and management committee, carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group/outing 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.

- 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 (ERSGB) may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

- Ofsted must be informed immediately.

- 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.

Managing people.

- Missing child incidents are very distressing and 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. Setting leaders 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 setting leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the setting leader and the other should be the chairperson of the management committee or representative. 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 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, 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 chairperson will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

