



### Critical incident – Lost or missing child

If a child becomes lost it may be that they have been able to leave the building un-noticed or managed to slip away while on an outing. 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, this procedure is followed.

To ensure child safety

- The front door and front gate are kept shut, the front door is locked at all times.
- Staff monitor all those entering the building and visitors are asked to sign in and out
- Visitors are not left unattended.
- Children are signed into the nursery on arrival and out of the nursery when leaving
- Each staff team undertakes regular head counts throughout the day
- The number of children and adults present in each room is updated on a Whiteboard in each room
- Whenever children are taken out of the building the senior member of staff carries a register of children taken out.
- An outings form is filled in and verified with the setting manager. On this form the children names are written with which staff is responsible for them during the outing. Risk assessments are completed depending on need.
- All gates within the nursery grounds are to be kept secure at all times.

In the building

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the key person/ member of staff alerts the manager.
- The room leader checks the register to make sure no other child has gone astray.
- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The manager and another member of staff check the immediate area.
- The Room supervisor informs the manager that there is a missing child.
- The manager, the deputy manager and the room supervisor would search the building and then check doors and gates to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out .
- The Administrator would check the CCTV for sightings of the child.
- If the child is not found, the police are called immediately.
- Continue the search, widening the area until the police arrive.
- Once the police arrive the parents will be contacted using their guidance.
- If it is suspected that a child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The manager contacts the Chair Person, who comes to the setting as soon as possible.
- If the child has gone off site and if police are informed a record is made on a serious incident form then put in the child's file.

Child goes missing on an outing:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the senior staff member present asks members of staff to stand with their children and carries out a headcount to ensure that no other child is missing.
  - One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
  - The senior worker contacts the police using the mobile and reports the child missing
  - The senior staff member contacts the manager using the mobile; the manager calls the parents
  - Another member of staff is sent to help bring the children back safely whilst the senior worker remains on scene
  - Members of staff return the children to the setting as soon as possible
  - According to the advice of the police, one senior member of staff should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive
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- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police
  - The manager contacts the chair person who comes to the setting.
  - In the event of this happening on a minibus trip everyone would stay on site in a place of safety
  - whilst arrangements are made for their safe return.

Outcomes and what to do next

**The child is found safely.**

- Details are logged on a serious incident form which is placed in the child's file and the summary is completed
- An investigation is carried out as below
- Ofsted is informed
- A RIDDOR report is completed if required following clarification from National Centre
- The child is not found or is found harmed or has died
- Everything as above (RIDDOR must be completed)
- Social Care is informed ( this may be done by the police)

**The investigation**

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and their advice taken.
- The setting's Chair Person, carries out a full investigation and reports it.
- The manager and the line manager speak with the parent together and explain the process of the investigation.
- The parent may also raise a complaint with the setting or with Ofsted
- Each member of staff from the outing writes a full report up, which is filed in the child's file. The manager logs a summary in the incident record book and on the Child Welfare and Protection

Summary

The report contains details of:

- The date and time of the incident.
- Where the child went missing from – setting/outing venue.
- What members of staff/ children were in the group/outing.
- When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
- The detail of the procedure that was then carried out.

- The report is 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.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements if necessary; the 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, the full report is shared with the Committee.