

## Lost or Missing Child Policy

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the outings procedure and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of children. In the unlikely event that a child goes missing, our missing child policy procedure is followed:

Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the premises and surrounding site is secure.

- The CCTV indoors and outdoors are in place and working, we have a book where we sign every week to check that the CCTV is working
- Staffs are required to register each child's arrival and departure
- Staff are required to count the number of children in the nursery at regular intervals
- If a child goes missing from the nursery the Management will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden
- The register is checked, and a head count done at regular intervals

### **If a child goes missing from the nursery:**

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, Management needs to be notified whilst the staff take a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- Management will search the immediate vicinity but will not search beyond that
- CCTV is checked to see if it is clear where the child has gone
- Management is informed and if they are not on the outing, they will make their way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff
- The Manager decides who will contact the child's parents who will make their way to the setting
- The staff will contact the police and report the child as missing by dialling 999
- The person in charge contacts the nursery owner
- An investigation is put into place and all information recorded on the Missing Child Record Log 5.0a

### **If a child goes missing on an outing:**

- 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. One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that
- Management is informed and if they are not on the outing, they will make their way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff
- Staff will take the remaining children back to the nursery
- The Manager decides who will contact the child's parents who will make their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the Manager
- The staff will contact the police using the mobile phone and report the child as missing by dialling 999
- In an indoor venue, the staff will contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The person in charge contacts the nursery owner
- An investigation is put into place and all information recorded on the Missing Child Record Log 5.0a

### **The Investigator**

- Staff are asked to keep calm so that the children do not get worried
- The Manager speaks with the parents
- The Missing Child Log 5.0a will be read and a conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened
- If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff will co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Ealing Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported UNDER RIDDOR arrangements as in our Recording and Reporting of Accidents and Incidents including RIDDOR Policy

## 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.
- 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. The management team will ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support whilst feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out on staff member or they may direct their anger at the management team. When dealing with a distraught parent there will, if possible, be two members of management. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police will be called if necessary.
- The other children area 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. Staff 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 management team will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff will not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.
- Ofsted will be informed (telephone number) 0300 123 1231 as soon as is reasonably practicable to do so but not later than 14 days after the event
- Ealing Social Care 020 8825 8000