



## 6 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults' procedures

### 6.5 Missing child

Children's safety is our highest priority both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our outings and our exit/entrance procedures, to ensure the security of children is always maintained. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, the procedure below is immediately implemented.

#### **In the building**

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the member of staff informs the Designated Safeguarding Lead who initiates a search within the setting.
- If the child is found on-site, the Designated Safeguarding Lead checks on the welfare of the child and investigates the circumstances of the incident.
- If the child is not found on site, two members of staff (equipped with pre-school walkie-talkies and a pre-school mobile phone) search the immediate vicinity, if there is no sign of the child, the Police are called immediately. The parents/carers are then called and informed.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead contacts the Trustees.

#### **Witnessed child boundary breach**

- Staff to immediately prevent further breach by using appropriate physical intervention
- Breach area to immediately be protected/repared to ensure no further access by other children
- Closest and most appropriate adult to pursue child immediately
- Manager/DSL to be informed immediately and will pursue child alongside staff member, taking mobile phone with him/her.
- If the child is secured immediately, and within a short distance of pre-school, a record is made on form 6.01b Safeguarding incident report form.
- Full health and safety risk assessment to be undertaken

#### **Unwitnessed child boundary breach**

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff must alert the Managers/DSL.
- The register is checked immediately to check no other child has gone astray.
- Managers to carry out a thorough search of the building and outside area.
- All doors and fences to be checked to see assess if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.



## SAFEGUARDING

- If the child is not found, the manager must call the police immediately and report the child as missing. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police must be informed of this.
- One or two (depending on ratios) members of staff search the immediate and wider vicinity.
- Parent(s)/carers to be contacted. If neither parent/carer can be reached staff will contact nominated emergency contacts for the child.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing to be given to the police.
- A Manager will speak to all relevant staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and record this.
- A Manager will contact one of the pre-school Trustees and report the incident. An investigation with our management team will be instigated. One of our Trustees will be required to attend the premises.

### **Off-site** (*outing/walk/village/forest school/church/outdoor learning*)

- A Pre-school walkie-talkie and mobile phone are always carried by members of staff for regular communication with the setting.
- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the senior staff present carries out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. Children will be asked to stand in an identified safe place.
- One or two (depending on ratios) members of staff search the immediate vicinity, but not beyond that.
- If the child is not found, the most senior staff present will call the Police and then contacts the Designated Safeguarding Lead, (if not already on the outing) who will begin recording the incident.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead informs the parents/carers. If neither parent/carer can be reached staff will contact nominated emergency contacts for the child.
- Members of staff return the remaining children to the setting as soon as possible if it is safe to do so. Police advice is that one senior member of staff should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the Police to arrive.
- Staff to remain calm and help other children not become anxious or worried.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead contacts pre-school Trustees (one of whom will be required to attend the premises). An investigation with our management team to be instigated.



### **Recording and reporting**

- A record is made on 6.1b Safeguarding Incident Reporting form. The Designated Safeguarding Lead completes and circulates it on the same day that the incident occurred.

### **The investigation**

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible (at least within 14 days) and kept up-to-date.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all staff, parents/carers and volunteers who were present

The details will include:

- *date and time of the incident*
  - *where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or while on an outing*
  - *which staff/children were in the premises/outing and name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child at the time*
  - *when the child was last seen on the premises/outing, including estimated time that the child went missing*
  - *what has taken place at the premises/outing since the child went missing*
  - *account to be counter-signed by the senior member of staff with the date and time added*
- Staff present during the incident write a full report using form 6.1b Safeguarding Incident Reporting form, which is filed in the child's file. Staff do not discuss any missing child incident with the press, or anyone not directly associated with the incident.
  - The Designated Safeguarding Lead speak with the parents/carers together and explain the process of the investigation.
  - Parent(s)/Carers to be informed that they have the right to raise a formal complaint with us and/or Ofsted.
  - A conclusion of the investigation is reached.
  - If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will co-operate fully. The police will handle all aspects of the subsequent investigation, including interviewing staff and parents/carers. Children's Service's may be involved if it is considered that there is a child protection concern.
  - In the event of staff disciplinary action Ofsted will be advised.
  - Pre-school's insurance provider will be informed.

### **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.



## SAFEGUARDING

- Our staff will be worried about the child, especially the key person/designated carer responsible for the safety of the child on 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.
- Managers/staff may be the understandable target of parental anger, and they may be afraid. Our manager will ensure that any 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 managers/staff and could single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger toward a manager. When dealing with distraught/angry parents there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is our manager, present. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against our staff will not be tolerated, and the police contacted if necessary.
- Other children may also be sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. Remaining staff caring for them must be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. Children's questions should be answered honestly, with reassurance.
- The severity of the outcome may mean our staff require counselling and support. If a child is not found injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. Our Trustees will use their discretion to decide what action/support is necessary.
- Our staff are prohibited from discussing any detail of a missing child incident with the press or anyone not associated with the incident, and they are not allowed to place any detail whatsoever on any social media platform/online anywhere without express permission. Any breach of this will be subject to our pre-school staff disciplinary procedure.