

H. Missing Child Procedure

Our setting has the highest regard for the safety of the children in our care. Staff will always be extremely aware of the potential for children to go missing during sessions.

Statement of intent

Even when all precautions are properly observed, emergencies can still arise. Therefore members of staff will undertake periodic head counts, especially at the transition points between sessions (in addition to the registration procedures set out in the Arrival and Departures policy).

If for any reason a member of staff cannot account for a child's whereabouts during a session at Welford Pre-school, the following procedure will be activated:

- The member of staff in question will inform both the person in charge and the rest of the staff team that a child is missing and a thorough search of the entire premises will commence.
- The staff team will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
- All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around Welford Pre-school.
- If after 15 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, the Manager will inform the police and then the child's parent/carer.
- While waiting for the police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, other members of staff will maintain as normal a routine as possible for the rest of the children at Welford Pre-school.
- The person in charge of the session and Manager will be responsible for meeting the police and the missing child's parent/carer. The Manager will co-ordinate any actions instructed by the police, and do all they can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.

The investigation

- Once the incident is resolved, the Chair of the management committee or another committee officer carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were on the outing.
- The key person/staff writes an incident report detailing:
 - the date and time of the report;
 - what staff/children were in the group/outing;
 - when the child was last seen in the group/outing;
 - what has taken place in the group/outing since then; and
 - the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened. The Manager and Chair of the management committee will review relevant policies and procedures, and implement any necessary changes. All staff will be informed of any new procedures.

- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff must co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Social Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) arrangements and 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. 0300 123 1231
- Our insurers are contacted.
- All incidents of children going missing from Welford Pre-school will be recorded in the Incident Record Book, and in cases where either the police or social services have been informed, Ofsted will also be informed, as soon as is practical.

If a child goes missing from an outing where parents/carers are not attending or are not responsible for their own child, Welford Pre-school ensures that there is a procedure that is followed.

- 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 staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The person in charge is informed. If they are not on the outing, they will make their way immediately to the location to aid the search, be the point of contact for the police, and support staff.
- Staff take the remaining children back to Welford Pre-school.
- The person in charge of Welford Pre-school contacts the child's parents/carers who makes their way to Welford Pre-school or outing location as agreed with the person in charge.
- Staff contact the police and report the child as missing.
- In an indoor location, staff contact the location's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The person in charge contacts the chair of the management committee or another committee officer, and requests they come down to Welford Pre-school as soon as possible to undertake an investigation as detailed in Welford Pre-school's Missing Child Policy.

Date reviewed	13/05/2021
This policy was adopted at a meeting of Welford Pre-school held on	20/05/2021
Signed on behalf of the Committee	<i>E Worrell</i>
Role of signatory	Chair