

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Missing Child

Statement of Intent

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. 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, our missing child procedure is followed.

A child can be classed as missing or lost if they have been left unsupervised or unaccounted for (so staff are not aware of them being within sight or hearing) in a room or the outside area of the setting or further a field for 2 minutes or longer.

Procedures

If a child goes missing from the setting the following actions will be carried out:

- [The person in charge will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden
- [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 person in charge talks to staff to establish what happened
- [The person in charge talks to children (using wording so as not to upset the children) to establish what has happened
- [If ratios allow staff members can search the nearby vicinity
- [If the child is found parents/carers will be informed when the child is collected that day. The situation will be explained and what will be put into place to prevent this from recurring.
- [If the child is not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police
- [The advice of the police is followed
- [All remaining children will be kept calm

If a child goes missing when away from the setting (e.g. from an outing) where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the following actions will be carried out:

DUNDRY PRE-SCHOOL POLICIES. Ofsted 115251

- [As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff who are with the group/ 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 searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that
- [If the child isn't found then the lead staff member contacts the venue's security who will handle the search. The venue security will be made aware that parents are about to be contacted so some discretion can be used until this has been done.
- [If the child is found parents/carers will be informed when the child is collected that day. The situation will be explained and what will be put into place to prevent this from recurring.
- [The person in charge is informed, if she is not with the group and makes her way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff
- [The person in charge of the setting contacts the child's parent (before she/he makes her way to the venue) who makes their way to the setting or venue as agreed with the person in charge
- [The lead staff member contacts the police using the mobile phone and report the child as missing
- [The advice of the police is followed
- [All remaining children will be kept calm
- [Staff take the remaining children back to the setting

The Investigation

- [The Setting Leader carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were with the group/ on the outing
- [Each key person writes an incident report detailing:
 - the date and time of the incident
 - 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
 - the time it is estimated that the child went missing
 - A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened
 - Children's comments are also noted if applicable

DUNDRY PRE-SCHOOL POLICIES. Ofsted 115251

- [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 may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address
- [The incident 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 within 14 days as a Missing Child can be deemed a significant event.
- [Our Insurance company is informed
- [A decision will be made as to whether staff disciplinary processes need to be followed
- [As a result of the investigation: risk assessments, policies and procedures will be updated and all staff and families will be made aware of the changes made
- [The parents/carer of the child involved will be given information about the investigation (whilst maintaining confidentiality of any staff members and other children)

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. 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, or the proprietor. 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

DUNDRY PRE-SCHOOL POLICIES. Ofsted 115251

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 or proprietor will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

Signed

Date.....

Review Date.....