

All Saints Nursery School

Safeguarding children Missing child

EYFS 2014 Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare

Policy statement

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 arrival departure procedures 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.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the manager calmly without causing panic.
- A member of staff will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- A member of staff will search the immediate local area taking the mobile phone until advised otherwise by the police.
- Children are called to the mat and the register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray. Children are kept inside with appropriate numbers of staff to maintain ratios
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If the child is not found, the parent is contacted by the manager. If unavailable the key person will continue calling until contact is made.
- The missing child is reported to the police by the manager
- The manager records and informs the police
 - The next of kin of the child
 - A detailed description of the child, age, sex, clothing
 - The circumstances of the incident, when and where the child was last seen, anything that may have triggered the disappearance

- Who is still looking for the child and their contact number
 - The manager documents any advice from the police
- The manager contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the management committee, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.
- Ofsted will be informed of the incident and its outcome in writing.
- Procedures will be changed as a result of the investigation and staff informed and given support and training where necessary. A new risk assessment will be carried out

Child going 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 staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The manager is contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- The manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the setting leader. The setting is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the setting.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting if possible or contact parents to collect them from the venue
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The manager contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the management committee, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.
- The manager, or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The manager together with the chairperson or representative from the management committee, speaks with the parent(s).
- The chairperson and management committee carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.

- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
 - What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- 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.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is 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.
- 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. 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 on their needs and must

not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.

- Once the child is found, children, staff and other parents who may have been involved are informed.
- 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 will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of _____ name of setting

Held on _____ (date)

Date to be reviewed _____ (date)

Signed on behalf of the management
committee

Name of signatory

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)