



Missing Child Policy

Pre-school Manager: Nicky Benson-Dare

This policy will be reviewed annually. It will also be revised following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance and procedures.

Statement

Children's safety at St. Peter's Busy Bees Pre-school is our highest priority, both on and off of our premises. Every attempt is made, through adherence to the setting's procedures, to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times.

Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible, using the procedures in place to ensure a quick, organised resolution is found as soon as possible.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the key person/staff alerts the setting manager.
- The setting manager/deputy will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden, while the staff gathers all of the other children together. The register is checked to make sure all other children are present.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security allowing a child to wander out.
- If a door/gate is found to be unlocked and open, one member of staff will go and look around the vicinity of the building and surrounding area.
- The setting leader calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.
- The setting leader talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The setting follows the direction from the police until the situation is resolved and the child is found.
- The setting manager contacts the chair of the committee and reports the incident. Details of the incident are recorded and listings of all actions/procedures followed are written down, including the outcomes.
- The setting leader together with a representative of the management team speaks with the parent(s).
- The committee carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff involved.

- An incident report is written detailing:
 - Date, their name, child's name.
 - Staff present, any visitors or helpers.
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group, the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the group.
 - What has taken place in the group since the child went missing.
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.

A conclusion is then drawn as to how the breach of security happened.

- Once the situation is resolved the committee and the setting's staff and management conduct an internal investigation and appropriate action is taken if required.
- The manager and committee chair person speaks with the parent(s).
- 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 reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents Policy). The local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed within 14 days. The insurance provider is informed.

Child going missing on an outing:

- The register of children attending is taken on the outing.
- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the outing leader asks the children to stand with their designated carer and carries out a headcount (using the register) to ensure that all other children are present.
- One staff member searches the immediate vicinity, checking if any gates have been opened.
- The manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded. If possible the manager is to attend the outing destination.
- The outing leader contacts the police and reports the child as missing, giving the

name, approximate time they went missing and any other requested information.

- The manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting/location.
- Staff remain calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- Staff and outing helpers take the remaining children back to the setting, if appropriate and if the police have not instructed otherwise.
- The outing leader, and setting manager (if arrived), wait for the police and follow their instructions.
- The manager contacts the chair of the committee and reports the incident. Details of the incident are recorded and listings of all actions/procedures followed are written down including the outcomes.
- The manager and committee chair person speaks with the parent(s).
- The committee chair carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff on the outing.
- The key person/outing leader writes an incident report detailing:
 - Date, their name, child's name.
 - Staff present, any visitors or helpers.
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were on the outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the group.
 - What has taken place in the outing group since the child went missing.
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.

A conclusion is then drawn as to how the breach of security happened.

- The manager and committee chair person speaks with the parent(s).
- Once the situation is resolved the committee and the setting's staff and management conduct an internal investigation and appropriate action is taken, if required.
- 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 reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of

Accidents and Incidents Policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed. The insurance provider is informed.

In an indoor venue:

- The staff will contact the venue's internal security staff who will co-ordinate the search and contact the police, if the child is not found.
- All other children are brought together by the outing helpers and staff, the register is taken and the children kept together until the situation is resolved.
- Staff remain calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The manager will contact the committee chair to report the incident.
- The manager or member of staff may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.
- The manager and committee chair person speaks with the parent(s).
- 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 reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents Policy). The local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed. The insurance provider is informed.

Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The manager and committee need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated, but receive support while feeling vulnerable.

When dealing with a parent after a missing child incident, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the manager/deputy and the other should be the chairperson of the committee or a representative.

No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff/management team are not tolerated. This should be made clear in a calm manner. The police should be called if required.

The remaining staff caring for the children in the setting 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.

Depending on 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. Support is to be provided to all staff and parents.

Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without permission from the pre-school committee.