

Guidance in the Event of a Child Going Missing

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the group's Health and Safety Policy, and Outings

Policy

Every effort should be made to ensure the safety of the children whilst in the group's care. This guidance sets out the procedures for dealing with the unlikely event of a child going missing from the group's premises or whilst on an outing.

Risk assessments should be undertaken on a regular basis and staff must be aware of times when extra vigilance is needed. If parents or guardians are required to remain with their children, for example, in a toddler group, it should be emphasised that they are responsible for ensuring the safety of their own child.

In the event of a child feared missing:

- The staff should not leave the premises unattended until the child has been found.
- A designated staff member should search the whole of the premises calling the child's name, checking all cupboards, unused spaces etc. If the child is not found on the premises the staff member should check the immediate surrounding area.
- A mobile phone should be taken to ensure contact is maintained with the premises.
- A designated person should gather the remaining children and other adults for story time in the book corner. They should ensure that the children are reassured and kept secure.
- If after 5-10 minutes there is no sign of the child, staff must dial 999 and alert the police.
- Staff must call the parent or guardian of the missing child
- Staff must call all other parents or guardians and ask them to collect their child.
- Staff should re-assure the children until they have been collected by their parents or guardian.
- Staff must cooperate fully with the police.
- A record of any incident must be made in the incident book and where the police have been contacted the manager should also inform the Care Commission Officer for the setting, if it is a registered day care service.

There should be designated persons who will undertake a search and who will remain and reassure the children.

Once the incident has been resolved, the staff team must review all relevant policies and procedures and implement any changes where necessary. This should also include a review of the security of the premises and effectiveness of risk assessments, to

ensure that adequate measures are being taken to minimise risk and safeguard the children. Where changes are required these should be made as soon as possible.

Outings

Before any outing, staff must carry out a written risk assessment to identify risks and to put in place measures that will safeguard all the children on the outing.

During playgroup outings, generally, parents or guardians will accompany their own children. As a general rule there should be a minimum child to adult ratio of 2:1 for all outings.

If a staff member or parent or guardian fears that a child is missing they must immediately inform the person in charge of the outing who should then:

- Gather the rest of the group together and check register.
- Designate two people to go to look for the missing child, if the parent or guardian of the missing child is present they should be one of the two.
- If after an appropriate time searching the child has not been found (5 -10 minutes) they should contact the Ranger, manager of the facility or police, as appropriate to the situation.
- Ask staff to gather parents, guardians and children and facilitate their return home.
- Ask staff to remain with the parent or guardian of the missing child and not leave until the missing child is found.

Staff must cooperate fully with police.

A record of the incident must be made in the incident book and where the police have been contacted the manager should also inform the Care Commission Officer for the setting, if it is a registered day care service.

Once the incident is resolved, the staff team must review all relevant policies and procedures and implement any changes where necessary. This will also include a review of the security of the premises and effectiveness of risk assessments, to ensure that adequate measures are being taken to minimise risk and to safeguard the children. Where changes are required these should be made as soon as possible.

NB It would be useful to attach this guidance to the group's Health and Safety Policy.

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