

Missing or Lost Child Policy and Procedure

All precautions are taken to ensure children are safe and secure on the premises at all times. Precautions are also taken if children are taken out of the nursery. To maintain security we will:

- Make sure the register is updated as soon as children arrive or leave the nursery.
- Make regular checks throughout the session to ensure all children are accounted for.
- Use an outdoor register when necessary.
- Ensure all staff know how many and which children are present.
- Ensure that children are within visual range of staff at all times.
- Ensure that whilst on walks children remain with nursery staff at all times; where needed staff to child ratios will be exceeded.
- Keep garden and external gates secure.
- Complete daily checks of gates, doors and fencing and report/repair any issues immediately.
- Double gate system on the front gate with locks on the outer side.
- Take a copy of this procedure every time staff take children out of the nursery as well as emergency contact details for each child.
- Make sure parents/carers are aware of collection/dropping off procedures for children's safety.

In the event of a missing or lost child the most senior member of staff present will take charge of the situation and follow the procedures below.

1. Ensure remaining children are safe.
 - Blow the forest school whistle
 - Children in the meadow will be taken to the cabin area on the decking.
 - Children and staff offsite (in the woods) return to the setting as soon as possible.
 - A full headcount of all children will be taken against the details recorded on the register.
2. Coordinate a search for the missing child.
 - Identify the lost child.
 - The premises, garden and immediate area are searched thoroughly and quickly by any staff available.
 - The nursery manager should be informed immediately and all communication and coordination should be through them.
3. Escalate to telephone the police if the child is not found within 10 minutes.
 - Staff will escalate to the Police using 999 or other agencies if needed if the child cannot be found within 10 minutes. This will normally be the most senior member of staff but any staff member can telephone the police if needed.
 - If the Police are called, they will take over the search and investigation
4. Ensure parents/carers, senior staff and other relevant parties are kept informed.
 - The most senior person in the nursery should notify the child's parents/carers as soon as possible.

5. Ensure follow up investigation is completed.

If the missing or lost child occurs on an outing:

- Blow the forest school whistle to call all children to you
- Identify the lost child.
- Safeguard other children by sitting them somewhere safe with a staff member and remaining calm.
- Check the nearby area. If you have enough staff organise a mini search around the area for up to 10 minutes.
- If this is unsuccessful telephone Police using 999 and follow their instructions.
- Continue to look for the child while waiting for the Police.
- Senior staff out in the woods or on a walk to inform the manager of what has happened giving them as many details as possible.
- The manager will keep in contact with the parents/carers to make them aware of what has happened and what action has been taken to locate their child.
- When the child is found, the child will be comforted and checked for injuries.
- The manager will inform the child's parents/carers

Following any missing or lost child incident (when the police have been called):

- A full investigation into the matter will take place and the issue will be reported to external bodies as required.
- The nursery manager will liaise with Ofsted to decide if the incident is reportable.
- The nursery manager and any other suitable member of staff will liaise with the parents/carers to discuss the incident.
- The nursery manager will fully investigate the incident, write a report and carry out a review of the safety procedures in the nursery. A copy of this report, plus any action plan will be forwarded to Ofsted in line with statutory requirements.