



# SHANKLEA EYFS

## Lost/Missing Child Policy and Procedure

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## **Lost/Missing Child Policy and Procedures**

### **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 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.

### **Procedures**

In the unlikely event of a child going missing within/from the Nursery, the following procedure will be implemented immediately

- The EYFS leaders, the Head and Deputy Heads will be informed immediately. The setting leader talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- Staff present will be deployed to start an immediate thorough search of the setting, followed by a search of the surrounding area, ensuring that all other children remain supervised throughout. Other available staff from the main school will be deployed to aid the search.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- The setting leader talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- Senior staff will carry out a second search of the area
- If the child has still not been accounted for, the Head, Deputy Head. Foundation Stage manager or Nursery leader will contact the police.
- The Head, Deputy Heads, EYFS Manager or Nursery leader will also contact the parents/carers of the missing child
- During this period, staff will be continually searching for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain as near to normal routine as possible for the rest of the children in the setting
- Senior staff will meet the police and parents/carers

- The Head, Deputy Heads, EYFS manager or Nursery leader will then await instructions from the police
- Any incidents must be recorded in writing
- Ofsted must be contacted and informed of any incidents
- With incidents of this nature parents, carers and children may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience.

### **Child going missing on an outing**

Regular head counts are carried out on children throughout the outing and the adult/child ratio is 1:2. In the unlikely event of a child going missing whilst on an outing from Shanklea Nursery the following procedure will be implemented immediately

- 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 Nursery leaders, the Head and the Deputies will be informed immediately and all staff present will be informed and deployed to start an immediate thorough search of the area, ensuring that all other children remain supervised throughout.
- If appropriate, on-site security will also be informed and a description of the child/children given.
- In the event of a child not being found, the designated person in charge will immediately inform the police
- The Head or the Deputy Heads will then contact the child's parents/carers giving details of what has happened. In the case of the whole Nursery being on an outing, all parents/carers details would be taken on the trip by the person in charge
- Staff from the setting or the main school will be sent to assist the safe return of the other children
- During this period, staff will be continually searching for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain the safety of the remaining children

- At least one member of staff will remain at the scene whilst others return to the Nursery with the children. This member of staff will continue searching for the child/children
- The remaining member of staff will meet the police and parents/carers when they arrive at a designated point
- Any incidents must be recorded in writing
- Ofsted must be contacted and informed of any incidents
- With incidents of this nature parents, carers and children may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience.

### **The investigation**

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Nursery leaders together with the Head, Deputy Head or Foundation Stage manager speaks with the parent(s).
- The Head, Deputy Head or Foundation Stage manager, 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 Services 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.

### **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. Senior staff will 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 Nursery leaders. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Nursery leader and the other should be the Head, Deputy Head or Foundation Stage manager. 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.
- 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 Head, Deputy Heads will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.