

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.



Safeguarding Children: Policy for dealing with A Missing Child

Policy statement

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our outings procedure and our 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

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the child's key person/the relevant member of staff alerts the Designated Lead/Deputy who initiates a search within the setting
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- The Designated Lead/Deputy will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- 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 found on-site, the designated person checks on the welfare of the child and investigates the circumstances of the incident.
- If the child is not found the child's parents and/or emergency contacts, the local police, social services and the Designated Person or their representative will be immediately informed. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The Designated Lead/Deputy talks to our staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the Designated Lead/Deputy and/or other staff back in our setting premises.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer 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.
- Our senior staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports that child as missing.
- The Designated Lead/Deputy is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- The Designated Lead/Deputy contacts the parent(s).
- Our staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible if it is safe to do so.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff, or our manager where applicable, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The Designated Lead/Deputy contacts the Designated Person and reports the incident. The Designated Person comes to our premises immediately to carry out an investigation.
- Our staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- A record is made on an incident reporting form and is issued to the Designated Officer.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible (within 14 days) and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- The Chairperson carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.
- The Designated Lead, together with the Designated Person speaks with the parent(s) and explains the process of the investigation.
- The parent(s) may also raise a complaint with us or Ofsted.
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the incident.
 - Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.
 - Which staff/children were in the premises/on the outing and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.

- When the child was last seen in the premises/or on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- What has taken place in the premises or on the outing since the child went missing.

Staff do not discuss any missing child incident with the press.

- The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents. 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 are advised.
- The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

- Everyone will be kept as calm as possible.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. The Chair of Trustees will use his/her discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff will not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

CROFTON EARLY LEARNERS

Held one

30 January 2024

Date to be reviewed

January 2025
