

1.3 Missing Child Policy

Policy Statement

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the 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:

Procedure

Child going missing on the premises:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff alert the person in charge.
- The person in charge calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.
- The person in charge will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- The register is checked to ensure that no other child has also gone missing.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The person in charge talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and this is recorded.
- The person in charge contacts Chloe Baker (the director) and reports the incident. The director comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation (where applicable). Where the director is unable to reach the setting (for example, is out of the country), alternative contact details are provided for an external representative to visit the setting.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a group of children on an outing, leaving the setting leader and/or other staff back in the setting. If the person in charge has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

What to do when a child goes missing from a whole setting outing may differ slightly as parents usually attend and are responsible for their own child(ren).

- As soon as it is noted that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone missing. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity, but does not search beyond that.
- The person in charge, or most senior member of staff who remained in the setting, is contacted immediately and the incident is recorded in the setting.
- The person in charge/senior member of staff contacts the police and reports the child as missing.

- The setting leader contacts the parent, who is requested to make their way to the setting.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security (where applicable) who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The setting leader contacts the director/owner (where applicable) and reports the incident. The director/owner comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation (where applicable). Where the director/owner is unable to reach the setting (for example, is out of the country), alternative contact details are provided for an external representative to visit the setting.
- The setting leader or a member of staff may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The Investigation

- Staff keep calm and support the other children to not become anxious or worried.
- The person in charge, together with a representative of the director/owner or alternative representative where applicable, speak with the parent(s).
- The director/owner 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/outing since the child went missing.
 - The time 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 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.
- 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. The person in charge needs to ensure that staff under investigation are not unfairly 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 other; they may direct their anger at the setting leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the person in charge and the other should be the director/owner or an alternative appropriate representative.
- No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police will 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 director/owner will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of:	Baker Street Pre-School and Nursery
Held on:	3.3.22
Date to be reviewed:	January 2023
Signed:	Chloe Baker
Name of signatory:	Chloe Baker
Role of signatory:	Director

Reviewed 1.2.21 by Heather Baker

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