



Pound Hill Pre-School Policy and Procedures

1.5 Missing child

Policy statement

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through carrying out the outing's procedure and the exit/entrance procedure, to ensure the security of children is always maintained. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

This describes the procedures that will be undertaken by all the team. Therefore, some of the actions will be occurring simultaneously

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the key person/practitioners alerts the Manager.
- The Manager calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent. The Manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The Manager talks to the practitioners to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Manager contacts the chair or a member of the committee and reports the incident. The chair comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management team.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when practitioners have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the Manager and/or other practitioners back in the setting. If the Manager 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 be a little different, as parents usually attend and are responsible for their own child.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, practitioners 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 practitioner searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.

- The manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting.
- Practitioners take the remaining children back to the setting.
- In an indoor venue, the practitioners contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The Manager contacts the chair and reports the incident. The chair comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management committee.
- The Manager or practitioners may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The investigation

- Practitioners keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Manager together with a representative of the committee, speak with the parent(s).
- The chair will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the practitioners in the room or who were on the outing.
- The key person/practitioner's member writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What practitioners/children were in the group/outing and the name of the practitioners 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 practitioners co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing practitioners. 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 Manager will ensure that practitioners under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two practitioners present, ideally, one of whom is the Manager and the other should be the chairperson of the management committee or

representative. No matter how understandable the parent’s anger may be, aggression or threats against practitioners are not tolerated, and the police should be called.

- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. The remaining practitioners 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, practitioners may need counselling and support. The chairperson will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Practitioners must not discuss any missing child incident with the press or on social media without taking advice.

This policy was adopted by

Role of signatory

Date

Date to be reviewed

K Platt

Manager

July 2021

01/09/2022

Missing Child Drill Procedure

One member of staff will remove a child to an area of Pre-School and remain with the child for the duration of the drill to pretend to be the 'missing child'

A second member of staff will notify practitioners that a child is missing, and the Supervisor of the day will then work to establish which child is missing. Without raising any alarm or panic the register will be collected and the children will be ticked off as located in the preschool with the help of all the remaining practitioners. This process will continue until the 'missing child' has been identified

The 'missing child' and staff member will then rejoin the other children within preschool.