



CHOLSEY PRE-SCHOOL POLICIES

Policy Name – Missing Child
Policy Number – CPS106

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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.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the key person alerts the manager/supervisor in charge.
- The supervisor in charge will carry out a thorough search of the building and outside area.
- 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.
- If the child is not found the supervisor in charge calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The supervisor in charge talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The supervisor in charge contacts the manager and chair (or deputy if the chair is unavailable) and reports the incident. The chair (or deputy), with the management committee carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

Child going missing on an outing

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



- 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.
- Our manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- Our manager contacts the parent(s).
- Our staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible.
- 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.
- Our manager contacts our Chair and reports the incident. Our Chair comes to our premises immediately to carry out an investigation, [with our management team (where appropriate)].
- Our staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- Our chair, carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.
- Our manager, together with a representative of our management team 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.
- The report is countersigned 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 cooperate 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

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 management committee 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 setting leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the manager and the other should be the chairperson (or deputy) of the management committee or representative. 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 chairperson will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff /Committee members must not discuss any missing child incident with the media. A nominated committee member who has a prepared and agreed (with the committee) statement shall communicate with the media only.
- Should anyone try to contact any member of staff in regards to the incident they will need to provide an agreed password to ensure they are not media or unauthorised person obtaining confidential information.
- Should a child be found by a member of public and returned to preschool full details of the person shall be obtained including name, contact details and a description of where, when and how they found the child. If necessary this information can be provided to the emergency services.