



## Missing Child Policy

### Statement of intent

Children's safety is of paramount concern at Playhouse Pre-School, however, In the best regulated situations, accidents can happen. In the event that a child becomes lost while in the care of the pre-school, the pre-school will implement the following procedures. These ensure that a systematic approach to finding the child is taken, whilst other children in the pre-school are kept safe and calm.

In the event that a child is missing, we will instigate an immediate search for the child, notify parents and authorities at the appropriate stage and maintain a high level of care for other children in the pre-school.

### Procedures

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the Pre-School Management Team must be alerted.

The person in charge will carry out an initial search of the Pre-School premises.

While the initial search is carried out, the register should be checked to confirm that the child was in the pre-school that session, that they have not been collected early and to ensure that no other child has gone astray.

The person in charge will then send a member of staff and any extra helpers available to search for the child. The senior person should contact the school to ask for assistance in searching in and around the school.

The search should be completed as thoroughly and as quickly as possible, before reporting back to the senior person.

While the extended search is being made, the senior person should establish from staff/visitors who have since left when the child was last seen, what they were wearing and their emotional state (happy, upset etc) and record this information.

If the child is not found, the senior person should contact the police, report the child as missing and follow their advice.

The senior person should contact the parents/carer and report the situation. The parents/carer should be asked to come to the pre-school by the normal route the child would take, preferably by walking. If the child is still missing when the parents arrive at the pre-school, police advice should be followed. This may include the parents returning home by the normal route and waiting, in case the child manages to make their way home.

Telephone lines should be kept as free as possible so that important information is not delayed.

Pre-school activities for the other children will continue as normal, with staff not involved in the search giving them their full attention, keeping the atmosphere as calm as possible.

## **The Investigation**

The Manager will carry out a full investigation.

The senior person must write an incident report detailing

- the date & time of the incident
- which staff, children, other adults were present
- when and where the child was last seen
- action taken to find the child
- what has taken place since then

A conclusion should be drawn as to how the incident occurred

The incident should be reported under RIDDOR arrangements and should be recorded in the incident book. The local authority Health and Safety Officer may also wish to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

OFSTED should be informed.

If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff should co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's schools and families may also be involved if it seems likely that there will be a child protection issue to address.

Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to keep everyone as calm as possible. Staff will feel worried and may blame themselves. Parents will be fraught and may be angry. Distraught and angry parents should always be dealt with by two members of staff (The Owner and Deputy Manager). Children may also be worried and need reassurance. Depending on the severity of the final outcome, staff and children may need additional support or counselling and the Owner should use their discretion to decide what action to take.

Staff members must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice

This policy was agreed by the staff of Playhouse Pre-School Broadwater.

Adopted on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025 by Z. Munford