

MISSING CHILD POLICY

Policy Statement

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

Avoidance: Longwick Pre-School has the following procedures in place to avoid a child going missing:-

- One key member of staff is by the entrance door at main start and finish times
- The setting door keys are kept out of reach of children but easily accessible to staff
- A child register is in place where each child is signed in and out of the setting by the staff upon entering and leaving the setting. This is processed through the nursery management system, Family, via the staff's Amazon Fire Tablets.
- The number of children present at each session is displayed so all the staff/volunteers know how many children are in at any time during the session
- A key child system is in operation so individual staff are aware of their own key children
- A register is taken at the beginning of each sessions main opening time and we take regular headcounts
- We headcount children in and out of the setting when using the outdoor play area
- Potentially hazardous areas of Longwick Village Hall such as the store cupboards and the areas beyond the kitchen are kept closed, locked or screened off
- All visitors are signed in and out whenever they enter or leave the premises
- Relevant emergency telephone numbers are kept to hand in the registration book and on the main notice board
- We talk to the children about safety in and out of the setting as part of our curriculum

Procedures for when a child goes missing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the person/staff alerts the setting leader
- The remaining children will be gathered into a large group with two staff members in order to free up the remaining adults to help search the premises
- The register will be checked to make sure no other child has gone astray
- The setting leader will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden
- We will try to establish who last saw the child, when and doing what
- All doors and gates will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out
- If the child is not found the police will be called (999) and given a full description of the child, age, what they were wearing, address. The parents will then be called
- The setting leader records what has happened in the incident book including when the child was last seen as soon as is possible
- The setting leader will contact the chairperson and reports the incident
- First Response must be informed no later than 24hrs after the incident and Ofsted within 2 weeks
- Our insurance company will also be contacted.

Whole Group Outings

Longwick pre-school asks that parents/carers accompany their children on outings and that they are responsible for their children for the duration of the trip. Some children may be in the care of a staff member, this will be on a ratio on one to one or in some cases one to two. In this circumstance, we will have written consent for that child and will have a record of all emergency contact details. There will always be a written risk assessment for any outing and we will carry an emergency first aid kit at all times.

Procedure for when a child goes missing on a whole group outing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the rest of the group will gathered together and a headcount will be taken to ensure that no other children are missing.
- Two staff members will search the immediate vicinity
- If it is a trip to a specific venue then they are alerted so that they can start their own security procedures
- If it has been established that the child is not in the area of the trip site the setting leader will contact the police and reports the child missing
- The setting leader contacts the parents of the missing child (if they are not at the trip). We will advise the parent to meet us back at the pre-school setting as the child may well have been found by then
- The remaining children will be taken back to the setting or taken home by their parent/carer
- The setting leader contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson with the management committee will carry out an investigation
- The setting leader and staff members may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The Investigation

- The setting leader together with the chairperson will speak with the parent (if the parent was not on the trip). Reassuring them that everything is being done to locate the child
- The chairperson and management committee will launch a full investigation taking written statements from all staff present and consulting with other parents/carers on the outing
- The setting manager will write an incident report stating –
 - The time and date of the report
 - What staff, children, parents and or carers were on the outing with the group
 - Who was responsible for the missing child?
 - When the child was last seen on the outing
 - What has taken place since the child went missing
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing
- A conclusion will be drawn as to how the breach of security happened
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will cooperate fully
- First Response will be informed within 24hrs and Ofsted within 2 weeks
- The insurance provider is informed if the pre-school is responsible for the missing child.

Contact numbers:-

- First Response – 01296 383 962
- Ofsted – 0300 123 1231
- Police – 101 or 999

Date Policy Implemented *April 2015*

Signed *Alex Barter*

Name and Role *Alex Barter, Committee Management Chair*

Date of Last Review *November 2023*

Date of Next Review *November 2024*