



Policy statement

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every attempt is made to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times; we do this by following all Trust, school and pre-school policies and procedures. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- The key person/staff alerts the manager/deputy and Head of School immediately.
- Manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and school grounds. School staff will assist in searching for the child off-site if necessary.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to ensure no other child goes astray.
- If the child is not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police. The Rise Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is notified.
- An investigation will follow.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the manager and/or other staff back in Pre-school. 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 reported that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person 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.

- Manager/Head of School is contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- Manager/Head of School contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The Rise Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is notified.
- Manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to Pre-school or outing venue as agreed with manager.
- Pre-school is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to Pre-school.
- Staff take the remaining children back to Pre-school.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- Manager or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.
- The Manager and Executive Headteacher, carries out an investigation.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- Manager together with the Executive Headteacher carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing. They will talk to police if deemed appropriate
- The staff members write 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 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 and the relevant HR Policy followed.

- 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.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed via Waltham School.

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 manager and the Executive Head will ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the manager. 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 Head of School or Executive Head. 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 manager and Executive Head will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press or anyone outside of the Pre-school setting.