Missing child Policy

Policy statement

Children’s safety is Binfield Preschool’s highest priority, both in the setting and off the premises. Every attempt is made to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times through our arrival and departure procedures and our outings procedures. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedure

All children are accounted for during the day and their arrival and departure times are marked in the register. Also, staff make regular head counts throughout the day.

A child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the manager is alerted
- The register is checked to make sure the child should be in attendance
- The manager will calmly carry out a thorough search of the building and garden
- The doors are checked to ensure there has been no breach of security
- The manager speaks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this
- If the child is not found, the manager calls the police immediately to report the child as missing and follows their instructions. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this
- The parent(s) are then called and informed
- The manager contacts the chair of the committee and reports the incident. The committee chair comes to the setting to carry out a thorough investigation on behalf of the committee.
- Ofsted is contacted and a written report of the incident is sent to them
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police
**Child going missing on an outing**

When taking the children on outings, a risk assessment is carried out beforehand and regular head counts are made throughout. Children are allocated to certain members of staff to ensure their safety at all times.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the manager is informed, and the staff bring all the other children together
- One staff member searches the immediate vicinity
- The manager contacts the police and reports that the child is missing
- The manager contacts the parent(s)
- The staff follow the advice given by the police as to whether to remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive or to take the remaining children back to the setting
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police
- The manager contacts our committee chair and reports the incident
- The 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
- The chair of the committee carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all the staff and volunteers who were present
- The manager and chair of the committee 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 writes an incident report detailing:
  - The date and time of the incident
  - Details of the incident
  - Where the child went missing e.g. the setting or an outing venue
  - Which staff/children were present and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child
  - When and where the child was last seen
- All reports are signed and dated
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all the staff co-operate 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 that disciplinary action is required, 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.
- Staff will understandably feel worried and upset and may feel a sense of blame. Feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases. The manager should be sensitive to the feelings and needs of the staff and give them time to compose themselves if required.
- Staff may be the target of parental anger, which may cause them to feel afraid.
- The manager will try her/his best at this time to support all parties involved.
- The manager will ensure that any staff under investigation are treated fairly and receive as much support as possible.
- While a child is missing, parents will obviously feel angry, fraught, and helpless and may want to blame the setting as a whole, the manager or a particular member of staff. While it is understandable for parents to feel that way, it is important to make it clear that we will not tolerate aggression or threats towards any of the staff. If necessary, the police should be called.
- The manager and assistant manager or chair of the committee should work together to support and reassure the parents while the incident is being handled.
- The remaining staff should as much as possible, keep the setting running normally and as smoothly as possible. It is important to keep everything as calm as possible for the remaining children in the setting and continue to focus on their needs. As soon as they become aware or sensitive to what is going on around them, the staff should reassure them and answer any questions as sensitively as possible. The staff should not discuss the incident in front of the children.
- Depending on the outcome of the incident or the follow-up investigation, it may be necessary for the staff to receive further training, counselling and/or support. This should be arranged as soon as possible by the manager and/or chair of the committee.
- Staff must adhere to our Confidentiality policy with regard to any incidents of Missing Children.

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<td>Signed on behalf of the provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of signatory</td>
<td>Adrian Hone</td>
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<td>Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)</td>
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