



Child Protection

1.5 Missing Child

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child protection

Abbots Langley Pre-School must have and implement a policy and procedures to safeguard children

Policy Statement

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the outing's 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 Pre-School leader/deputy alerts the Pre-School owner who will then immediately come to the Pre-School.
- The Pre-School leader and/or Pre-School owner will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- 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.

Abbots Langley Pre-School – Missing Child Policy

- The Pre-School leader or Pre-School owner calls the police and reports the child as missing. They will also inform the police if they suspect the child has been abducted.
- The Pre-School owner will then call the parents or carers.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing will be given to the police.
- The Pre-School owner will talk to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.

Child going missing on an outing

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

When a child goes missing from a whole Pre-School outing the procedure may be a little different, as parents usually attend and are responsible for their own child.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the Pre-School leader 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.
- The Pre-School leader contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The Pre-School leader then contacts the Pre-School owner immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- The Pre-School owner contacts the parents/carers who will make their way to the Pre-School.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the Pre-School.
- The Pre-School leader or Pre-School deputy may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

Abbots Langley Pre-School – Missing Child Policy

- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The Pre-School owner will carry out an immediate investigation to what has happened
- Our staff will keep calm and not make the other children anxious or worried

The investigation

- The Pre-School owner will inform Ofsted and keep them up to date with the investigation
- The Pre-School owner will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing
- The Pre-School owner and the Pre-School leader will speak with the parents/carers and explain the process of the investigation
- The parents may also wish to raise a complaint to Ofsted
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the incident.
 - Where the child went missing from e.g. the Pre-School or another venue.
 - Which staff/children were in the Pre-School or on the outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the Pre-School or on the outing including the estimated time the child went missing.
 - What has taken place in the Pre-School or on the outing since the child went missing.
 - The report is signed, dated and timed by the staff member and countersigned by the Pre-School owner.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff must 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.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

Abbots Langley Pre-School – Missing Child Policy

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 Pre-School owner needs 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 Pre-School leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Pre-School leader and the other should be the Pre-School owner. 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 Pre-School owner will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This Policy was adopted at a meeting of Abbots Langley Pre-School held on	MARCH 2020
Date to be reviewed	MARCH 2022 OR SOONER IF CHANGES ARE REQUIRED
Provider	Pre-School Owner