

Critical incident – missing or lost child



If a child becomes lost it may be that they have been able to leave the building un-noticed or managed to slip away while on an outing. Every attempt is made through carrying out the outings 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, this procedure is followed.

In the building

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the key person/ member of staff alerts the manager.
- The room leader checks the register to make sure no other child has gone astray.
- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried
- The manager and another member of staff check the immediate area.
- The Room supervisor informs the manager that there is a missing child
- The manager, the deputy manager and the room supervisor would search the building and then check doors and gates to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out .
- The Administrator would check the CCTV for sightings of the child
- If the child is not found, the police are called immediately
- Continue the search, widening the area until the police arrive
- Once the police arrive the parents will be contacted using their guidance
- If it is suspected that a child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police
- The manager contacts the Chair Person, who comes to the setting as soon as possible
- If the child has gone off site and if police are informed a record is made on a serious incident form then put in the child's file.

Child goes missing on an outing:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the senior staff member present asks members of staff to stand with their children and carries out a headcount to ensure that no other child is missing.
- One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that
- The senior worker contacts the police using the mobile and reports the child missing
- The senior staff member contacts the manager using the mobile; the manager calls the parents
- Another member of staff is sent to help bring the children back safely whilst the senior worker remains on scene
- Members of staff return the children to the setting as soon as possible
- According to the advice of the police, one senior member of staff should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive

- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police
- The manager contacts the chair person who comes to the setting.
- **In the event of this happening on a minibus trip everyone would stay on site in a place of safety whilst arrangements are made for their safe return.**

Outcomes and what to do next

The child is found safely.

- Details are logged on a serious incident form which is placed in the child's file and the summary is completed
- An investigation is carried out as below
- Ofsted is informed
- A RIDDOR report is completed if required following clarification from National Centre

The child is not found or is found harmed or has died

- Everything as above (RIDDOR must be completed)
- Social Care is informed (this may be done by the police)

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and their advice taken
- The setting's Chair Person, carries out a full investigation and reports it.
- The manager and the line manager speak with the parent together and explain the process of the investigation
- The parent may also raise a complaint with the setting or with Ofsted
- Each member of staff from the outing writes a full report up, which is filed in the child's file. The manager logs a summary in the incident record book and on the Child Welfare and Protection Summary.

The report contains details of:

- The date and time of the incident
- Where the child went missing from – setting/outing venue
- What members of staff/ children were in the group/outing
- When the child was last seen in the group/outing
- The detail of the procedure that was then carried out
- The report is signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements if necessary; the 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, the full report is shared with the Committee.