

Missing Child

Missing child from the setting

If a child goes missing from the setting the following procedure will be initiated:

- Person in charge talks to staff to establish what happened.
- Two members of staff will carry out a thorough search for the child within the building, in the garden and surrounding area. Adequate staff will stay in the setting to maintain the correct ratio of staff to children. If there are not enough adults within the group to maintain the correct ratio then that extra adult will be allocated from the local school.
- 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.
- The search for the child will be no more than fifteen minutes initially.
- If the child is not found the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.

Missing child during an outing

If a child goes missing from an outing where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the following procedure will be initiated:

- As soon as it is noticed 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 searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The person in charge is informed, if s/he is not on the outing and makes his/her way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.

- The person in charge of the setting contacts the child's parent who make their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the person in charge.
- The staff contact the police using the mobile phone and report the child as missing.
- 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.
- The person in charge contacts the chairperson of the management committee who comes down to the setting as soon as possible.
- The management committee chairperson carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were on the outing.
- 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.

In both situations...

- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements and is recorded in the incident book; the local authority health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- OFSTED is informed.
- The Insurance Department is informed.