



The Little Meadow Group

Missing Child

Procedure

Issue 4

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Missing Child

Policy Statement.

Little Meadow Group holds children’s safety as a high priority at all times, whether on or off the premises. Every attempt is made through tight procedures for exit and entrances to outings to ensure security is maintained at all times. The measures within the premises consist of 2 gates which are kept locked at all times outside of arrival and collection. The outer front door which is open to the public when the office is staffed otherwise arrival is alerted to staff via a buzzer and telecom. The inner lobby door is activated by magnetic key fob or from the cloakroom/office by a recognised person to the setting. Both playroom doors have sensors that activate an audible warning when opened. In the unlikely event of a child going missing the setting will follow its missing child procedure.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning And Development
1.3 Keeping safe. 1.4 Health and Well being	2.2 Parents as Partners	3.4 The Wider Context	

Procedure

1. Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the Key Person/staff will alert the Group Manager or senior staff member on site.
- They will then conduct a thorough search of the building and garden.
- The register will be taken to ensure all other children are accounted for.
- Doors and gates will be checked to ensure there has been no obvious breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If the child is not found the parent must be contacted and a missing person report filed with the police.
- The Senior staff member / Manager will contact the Chairperson to report the incident. They will then carry out an immediate investigation which may involve coming straight to Little Meadow.



2. Child going missing on an outing.

This procedure covers what the Little Meadow staff are to do when taking a small group of children on an outing leaving other staff and the Manager at the setting. If the Manager has accompanied the children then the procedure will need adjusting accordingly. The action to be followed when there is a whole setting outing will be a little different as often parents also attend and are therefore assume responsibility for their own children.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff are to ask the children to stand with their designated person and a headcount is carried out to ensure no other child is unaccounted for. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but must not search beyond that.
- The play leader or Manager must be contacted immediately and the incident reported.
- The Play Leader or Manager are then responsible for contacting the police and reporting the child missing.
- In an indoor venue, staff should contact the venue's security who may conduct a search and contact the Police if the child is not found.
- The Play Leader/ Manager will then contact the parents of the missing child and ask them to make their way to either the setting or the outing venue as agreed between them. The Manager/Play Leader will always recommend the parents make their way to the setting as by the time they arrive the child may have been returned to the setting.
- Staff on the outing will return immediately with the other children.
- The Senior staff member / Manager will contact the Chairperson to report the incident. They will then carry out an immediate investigation which may involve coming straight to Little Meadow or the scene of the incident.
- The setting leader or a designated member of staff maybe advised by the Police to stay at the venue until they arrive. Should this situation arise, the setting Manager will arrange for the remaining staff and children to return safely.

The Investigation.

- It is imperative for the Little Meadow staff to keep calm to avoid the other children becoming anxious or worried.
- The Group Manager together with the chairperson or a representative of the committee will speak with the parents.
- The Little Meadow Group Chair and committee will conduct a full investigation taken written statements from all staff and adults that were present at the time of the child disappearing.
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report (Appendix 1) detailing:
 - The date and time of the report
 - Names of staff and children in the group and the name of the designated child for the missing person.
 - When the child was last seen
 - What had taken place since the child went missing.
 - The estimated time the child went missing.



- A conclusion must be drawn based on the facts to identify how the breach of security happened.
- Should the incident require a Police investigation, The Little Meadow Group will expect complete co-operation of all staff, including interviewing staff. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident may be 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 being taken, Ofsted will be informed.
- The Group will also inform its insurance provider.

Managing people.

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident involves trying to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The group recognise their staff especially the key person and/or the designated person will feel particularly worried about the child. They will probably feel responsible and the longer the child is missing the more heightened their distress will become.
- The Group Manager/ Chairperson must ensure all staff especially those under investigation must be treated fairly and given support. Staff maybe the target of parental anger and although understandable, the setting must support both parties.
- Parents will feel angry and anxious. They may look to blame all staff or single out one particular member or they may vent their anger at the setting Manager. When dealing with parents staff should never be on their own preferably the two people will be the Group Manager and the Chairperson. Although the Little Meadow Group will be sympathetic to the parents feelings, if at any time they feel threatened either physically or verbally, this should not be tolerated and the Police should be called.
- The other children may be concerned recognising something is going on around them it is imperative that the staff support the children and focus on their needs. Staff should also ensure they are not talking about the incident in front of the children. The Little Meadow group recognise it is important to answer the children's questions truthfully but that this should be done at an appropriate level and the children must be reassured.
- The need of staff post incident will be dictated by the outcome and staff may need counselling and professional support. The Chairperson or Manager will use their discretion to decide what actions to take.
- Little Meadow staff should not talk to anyone regarding the incident that is not approved by the setting and should not without advice talk to the press.



Missing Child Incident Report

Date and Time of report			
Incident location (circle venue)	Setting	Outing	Location -
Staff present			
Children present			
Designated person of missing child			
When and where was the child last seen			
Approx. What time was the child identified as being missing			
What happened after the child was identified as missing			
Name of person completing form			
Signed		Date	