

Missing and Lost Child Policy and Procedures

Statutory Framework and Context

This policy is mandatory and has been formulated in strict compliance with the UK Department of Education **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** (Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements). Under the EYFS framework, providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well, and maintain a written procedure to be followed in the event of a child going missing on or away from the premises.

Robust Preventative Safeguards

- **Live Registration:** All children must be formally signed in and out on an active attendance register immediately upon arrival and departure, including precise timestamps.
- **Secure Physical Perimeter:** All entry/exit gates and external doors must remain locked at all times. All visitors must be logged, verified and chaperoned.
- **Supervision Ratios:** Staffing ratios must strictly align with or exceed EYFS requirements. Children must remain within sight and hearing of staff at all times, with enhanced vigilance during transitions.
- **Attendance Monitoring:** unexplained or prolonged absences are actively tracked and followed up within two hours of scheduled arrival in line with the setting's **Attendance Policy**.

Procedure: Child Missing On Premises

In the highly unlikely event that a child cannot be immediately located within the setting:

Step 1 Immediate Alert	The discovering staff member must immediately alert the Manager/ Safeguarding Lead – DSL or DDSL, without causing panic among the other children.
Step 2 Verification	A rapid headcount and register verification are performed by designated staff to confirm exactly which child is missing and ensure all other children are secure.
Step 3 Systematic Search	The remaining staff maintain standard care while available senior staff initiate an immediate, rigorous search of all areas (toilets, outdoor spaces, sheds and site boundaries) Brook Field School Office will also be alerted. Search window is limited to a maximum of 10 minutes
Step 4 Emergency Contacts	If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the Playgroup Manager/Lead will immediately call emergency services 999 and contact the child's parents or carers.

Procedure: Child Missing Off Premises (Outings and Trips)

We will take a picture of the group of children before we leave so we know what they are wearing for a description.

Step 1 Containment	The Lead Practitioner instantly secures and gathers the remaining children. Staff execute a full headcount and register check to ensure group integrity
Step 2 Public Venue Alert	The Lead Practitioner immediately notifies the venue management, security or park rangers to secure exits and broadcast descriptions.
Step 3 High Speed Search	Designated staff search the immediate vicinity. Due to heightened public risks the search threshold is strictly to a maximum of 5 minutes
Step 4 Emergency Dispatch	If the child is not found within 5 minutes, staff dial 999 for the police, and notify the Manager, who will immediately inform parents

Critical Metrics for Emergency Services

When contacting the police, the Manager/Lead must clearly communicate:

- The Child's full name, date of birth and home address.
- A detailed description of the child's clothing, physical appearance and distinguishing features.
- The exact time, location and circumstances under which the child was last seen.
- The names of emergency contacts, parents and any specific vulnerabilities or medical needs.

Regulatory Obligations and Post-Incident Review

Mandatory Notification: in accordance with statutory obligations, the nursery must notify Ofsted and local children's social care services as soon as reasonable practicable, and strictly within **14 days** of any major incident or security breach.

Investigation and Review: Following any incident, a comprehensive internal investigation will be launched by the Chairperson/Manager/DSL. A complete timeline log will be drafted, environmental risk assessments re-audited and immediate physical modifications to security perimeters enacted where necessary. Confidentiality must be maintained, and no staff member may comment to external media.

Emotional Support: Post-incident debriefing and professional counselling pathways will be made available to families, affected children and the nursery staff members.

Policy Re-Written 1st September 26 – R Cockbill Chairperson