

# Missing Children Policy V.2

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/EarlyYearsCentre/Missing ChildrenPolicy  
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# Policy

**Title:** Missing children

**From:** Early Years Centre

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Safety of children, while in the Centre or off the premises on outings is of the highest priority at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, the Centre will carry out procedures to ensure every avenue is explored to locate the child.

## *Child going missing on the centre premises*

- Immediately after noticing a child is missing, the member of staff will alert the rest of the staff and the Senior Early Years Practitioner.
- While ensuring the Centre is within its ratios the rest of the staff will do a thorough search of the whole building and outside play area.
- A member of staff will notify the Centre Manager and / or Early Years Co-ordinator in charge, whilst the other staff continue to search
- The manager in charge will carry out a second search of the area
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray
- The manager will establish who last saw the missing child, where and when
- The manager will notify University Security
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby the child could have wandered out
- If the child is not found, the parent is contacted, the missing child is reported to the police
- The manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The manager reports to Kerry Matthews (line Manager for the Centre) and OFSTED is also informed.

## *Child going missing on an outing*

On many outing parents will be asked to accompany their child and so will be responsible for them. However on the occasion when the outing involves staff only and a child goes missing the following procedure will take place:-

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing will ask the children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure no other child has gone astray. One staff member will search the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The person in charge of the outing will immediately report the incident to the main office at the place of the outing (eg:- Zoo, Farm etc).
- The person in charge immediately reports the missing child to the police
- The person in charge will contact the EY Centre to inform the manager
- The person in charge will phone the parent to inform them of the missing child
- The remaining staff take the other children back to the setting
- The manager will contact Kerry Matthews (Line Manager)
- The person in charge remains at the outing venue until the child is found or they are advised by the police to leave
- OFSTED are informed.

## *Investigation of event*

- Staff need to keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried
- The manager, person in charge of the outing and the person responsible for the child will talk to the parent/s

# Policy

- A full EYC investigation will be made and written statements taken from all members of staff who attend the outing. The written statement will include:-
  1. the date and time of the report
  2. who was on the outing staff and children (full names)
  3. when the child was last seen in the group
  4. the estimated time the child went missing
  5. what happened once the group realised the child was missing
  6. the estimated time the child went missing
- A conclusion is drawn up as to how the breach of security occurred
- If an incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will co-operate fully. In this instance, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. The local authority may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The health and safety officer at the University will need to be informed and will carry out their own investigation and will then decide if there is a case for prosecution
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, OFSTED is informed
- The insurance provider is informed

## *Managing people*

Missing children is very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone calm. Staff will feel worried especially the person who was responsible for the child while on the outing. They will probably blame themselves, feel anxiety and distressed this may 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. Other staff and managers need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable. Parents will feel angry and they may want to blame someone, no matter how understandable the parents anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated and the police should be called.

Remaining staff in the setting need to focus on the children in their care as they too may be worried. Staff should not discuss the incident in front of the children, but should answer any questions a child asks as honestly as possible.

Some staff may need counselling and will need to be referred to Occupational Health within the University.

Staff must not discuss any missing child with anyone outside of the Centre especially the 'Press'. Any calls are to be referred to the EYC Manager or Assistant Director (Client Services).