

Dartmouth Pre-School

Lost Child Policy

Statement of Intent

In the event that a child is considered missing during the day; Dartmouth Pre-School puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure that staff know what procedures to follow, and that the child's whereabouts are discovered, or the relevant authorities are notified, as quickly as possible.

Aim

In the event that a child is thought to be missing, we will ensure that a thorough search is implemented, and that other children continue to receive a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible.

Methods

The following procedures should be followed in the event that a child is thought to be missing:

Missing Child

If a child goes missing from the setting:

- The person in charge will carry out a thorough search of the building.
- 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 whereby a child could wander out.
- If the child is not found the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police. If a child goes missing from an outing where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the setting ensures that there is a procedure that is followed.
- 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 member searches the immediate vicinity, but does not search beyond that.
- The person in charge is informed, if they are not on the outing, and makes their way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police, as well as support staff.
- Staff will take the remaining children back to the setting.
- The person in charge of the setting contacts the child's parent who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the person in charge.
- The staff will contact the police using the mobile phone and report the child as missing.
- In an indoor venue, the staff will contact the venue's security that will handle the search and contact the police, if the child is not found.
- The person in charge contacts the chairperson of the parent committee and/ or the Manager, who comes down to the setting as soon as possible.

The Investigation

- The parent committee chairperson and the Manager carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were on the outing.

- The staff writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the report;
 - What staff/ children were in the group/outing;
 - When the child was last seen in the group/outing;
 - What has taken place in the group/outing since then; and
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
 - 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. Social Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
 - The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements and is recorded in the incident file, 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 at the Pre-School Learning Alliance is informed.

All the undertakings mentioned above are subject to the paramount commitment of Dartmouth Pre-School, which is to the safety and well being of the child. Please see also, our policy on child protection.

Approved:

Committee Chair

Adopted on 14.7.15

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