



**EYFS: The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements  
3.62 & 3.72**

## **Child Protection**

### **1.6 Missing Child**

#### **Policy Statement**

- At Auden Place Community Nursery, children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off the premises.

#### **Procedures if a child goes missing on the premises.**

- In the unlikely event of a child being lost within the nursery boundaries, the member of staff discovering this must alert the nursery manager to see whether or not the child has been collected early, or gone on a nursery outing.
- If this is not the case, the doors must be checked to ensure that they are not open for a child to have gone through them.
- A senior member of staff will thoroughly search each room in the nursery i.e. office, kitchen, toilets, lift shafts, Sunshine, Rainbow & Star Room and the immediate vicinity around the nursery. N.B. Some of these are non-children areas.
- Whilst the search is ongoing, a member of the management team will check the CCTV to see if we can either locate the child or see the last time they were visible.
- We ensure the safety of the remaining children with regard to appropriate supervision and security.
- If the search is unsuccessful within 10 minutes, then the parents or emergency contacts will be informed, and the police contacted.
- The nursery manager will talk to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and record this.
- The manager will then contact the chairperson of the management committee and report the incident. The chairperson, along with the management committee will carry out an investigation, and may come to the nursery immediately.
- Identified staff by management will continue to search, extending the search area and keep in touch by mobile so communication can be maintained.
- All other staff remain at nursery with the other children.

#### **Procedures if a child going missing on a nursery outing**

- Each outing requires an Outings Form to be completed, and a copy to be taken on the outing with the names of the children and staff written clearly.
- Regular counts are conducted on outings to ensure child safety.
- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and the outing leader carries out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone.
- The staff need to sit all the remaining children together in a safe place, while one member of staff searches the immediate vicinity.
- The outing leader must contact the nursery manager by phone to report the incident.
- If the child has not been found from this initial search the nursery manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The nursery manager also contacts the parents who need to make their way to the nursery or the place where they were out on a walk as agreed by the manager. The



nursery is usually the best place, as by the time they arrive, the child may have been returned to the setting.

- A member of staff needs to stay at the point of where the child went missing with a mobile phone for the parents and/or the police to arrive.
- If on a local outing, the remaining children need to be brought back to nursery with the remaining adults. If possible, a member of staff will be released to meet them at their location to assist in ratios.
- The manager will then contact the chairperson of the management committee and report the incident. The chairperson, with the management committee will carry out an investigation, and may come to the nursery immediately

### **Procedures if a child going missing on a nursery trip**

- Each outing requires an Outings Form to be completed, and a copy to be taken on the outing with the names of the children written clearly.
- Children wear fluorescent jackets when out on trips so that they can be easily identified in busy places.
- Regular counts are conducted on outings to ensure child safety.
- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and the trip leader carries out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone.
- The staff need to sit all the remaining children together in a safe place, while one member of staff or nursery volunteer searches the immediate vicinity.
- The trip leader must contact the nursery manager by phone to report the incident.
- In an indoor venue such e.g. museum, the staff should contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if not found.
- If the child has not been found from this initial search the nursery manager will contact the police and report the child as missing.
- The nursery manager will also contact the parents who need to make their way to the nursery or the outing venue as agreed by the manager. The nursery is usually the best place, as by the time they arrive, the child may have been returned to the setting.
- A member of staff needs to stay at the point of where the child went missing with a mobile phone for the parents and/or the police to arrive.
- The manager then contacts the chairperson of the management committee and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the management committee carries out an investigation, and may come to the nursery immediately

### **The Investigation**

- It is very important that staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The nursery manager together with the chairperson or representative from the management committee speaks to the parent/s
- The chairperson and management committee carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The staff member who reported the incident writes the incident report detailing
  - The date and time of the trip, investigation and report
  - What staff and children were in the group or outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
  - When the child was last seen in the group or outing, and what the child was wearing



- What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
- The time it was estimated that the child went missing.
- An investigated conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is 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.
- The incident will also be reported to Ofsted.
- The nursery insurance provider is informed.

### **Managing people**

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will 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. Setting leaders need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the setting leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the setting leader and the other should be the chairperson of the management committee or representative, or the proprietor. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be an extremely difficult time. The chairperson or proprietor will use their discretion to decide what action to take. (Auden Place Provides this service - see policy 3c.1 Employment and staffing)
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

### **Children's absences**

- Children being absent from the setting repeatedly or for prolonged periods of time may be a vital warning sign for a range of safeguarding issues.
- Staff/Management will contact parents if children are not in the setting by 10.00am and we haven't heard from there regarding their absence. If no answer from parents, we would contact their emergency contacts.
- If we suspect repeated absences or absences for prolonged periods of time these would be recorded & we would contact Camden Children & Families Contact Team.

