

Mogghill Nursery School

Missing Child Policy

Statement of Intent

The welfare of children in our care is paramount. Every member of staff has equal responsibility in ensuring the safety of the children and knowing where they are. In the event that a child goes missing from the preschool session, the preschool puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure that the child is found as soon as possible and that the correct people are informed. This very rarely happens but complacency is a hazard we must avoid at all costs.

Aim

In the event that a child goes missing, we will ensure that the following procedures are followed. We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if a child goes missing we assure you we are doing everything we are capable of to find them.

Procedures

Systems in place to minimise the risk of children going missing -

- Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the premises and surrounding site is secure
- The attendance register is taken at the start of each session and the number of children attending is displayed. It is the responsibility of every member of staff to be aware how many children are present and a quick headcount should be taken at intervals during each session. Children who arrive late must be recorded in the register and those who leave early should be marked out accordingly
- Key workers of new children should take extra care to be aware of their whereabouts and ensure they know the boundaries of where they can and cannot go. Parents will be advised of our security procedures and be given the opportunity to discuss any concerns, particularly if their child has an adventurous nature. The names of children present at each session will be displayed and all staff will be responsible for keeping a note of their presence
- Gates and doors are kept closed and where appropriate secured
- Parents must be made aware of the need for supervision of children at all times, especially while waiting for the group to open, and of their responsibility to ensure that their child's arrival is noted

- Children should be counted before going out to play and again when they are lining up to come back indoors. A member of staff should be at the end of the line to ensure no children are left outside. Once inside it must be ascertained that the correct number of children are still present.

In the event of a child being found to be missing it is vital that prompt action is taken

- 1. The missing child (children) should be identified and the last known whereabouts recorded.** (The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is noted as soon as possible. Staff must be vigilant in ensuring that all children are present)
- 2. The senior member of staff will arrange for the other children to be satisfactorily supervised.** (The remaining children should be gathered together for a storytime/music session. Without alarming them, the children should be asked if they have seen the missing child.
- 3. A systematic search will be carried out to see if the child can be located in the surrounding area.**
 - All toilets, cupboards, kitchen, under tables, cushions, anywhere a child might hide
 - Outside areas, including play house, climbing frame
 - Check all exits for where a child may have been able to leave the premises or site
 - The car park will also be checked
- 4. The officer in charge will then inform -**
 - a) The parents/carers of the child** - alarming them as little as possible. If they do not answer the phone a message must be left on any answering service before attempting alternative numbers. However if parents do not answer the home phone number the police must be contacted before attempting other contact numbers. If contacted parents should be advised to stay at home in case the child arrives there; be advised that we are contacting the emergency services and that a member of staff is searching the route the child may take home. Parents should be asked for information of anywhere else the child may head for eg. Grandparents, other relatives, local park etc
 - b) The police and/or any other emergency services** - The police have the resources to conduct a search and speed is important
 - c) The appropriate Ofsted officer** -they will need to know our systems for preventing this occurrence and what happened. It is

important that the senior officer in charge keeps a record of events

5. **Check route home** (If the child cannot be located a member(s) of staff should search along a possible route the child might take to get home. Where able they should take a mobile phone to keep in contact. If a member of staff arrives at the house without finding the child they should make contact with the group for further instructions)
6. **Record of events.** The following details are noted in order to help as much as possible in the investigation and search
 - Date time and location of disappearance
 - Who was responsible for the care of the child at the time
 - What was the child wearing
 - Any distinguishing features
 - Circumstances surrounding disappearance
 - Time parents/other agencies contacted
 - A record of events should be logged in the incident book by the senior officer in charge or by another member of staff delegated by them.
7. **Informing other people** - As soon as possible after the incident the following people should be notified:
 - The group's insurance company
 - All parents
 - Somerset Council Early Years Team
 - The duty social worker

Details of time and who was contacted will be recorded

8. A full written report of the incident is recorded
9. **Dealing with reactions** - It is natural that the child's parents will be frightened, distressed and angry. Other parents will be rightly concerned for the safety of their own children. The preschool staff will also be shocked and upset at any lapse in security. All emotions and reactions must be dealt with in a caring and understanding way. However, until the situation has been fully investigated by all parties, all staff must refer any parent and media enquiries to the preschool owner.

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