

The **PEAPOD**
Lost Child policy 2018

Purpose of this policy

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through carrying out the outings procedure and the exit/entrance procedure, to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, the setting will follow the missing child procedure below.

This policy has been read and approved by the following staff

Sarah Howlett
Manager, LSO, Owner

Carla Andrade
Deputy Manager + HASCo

Joanna Markwell
Assistant Deputy + SENCo

Date _____

Date _____

Date _____

This policy will be updated as necessary, and reviewed no later than October 2018

Date this policy was replaced _____

Procedures

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Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, [the child's key person/the relevant member of staff] alerts the manager.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- The manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- 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 manager will call the police immediately and reports the child as missing. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this.
- The parent(s) are then called and informed.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The manager will talk to all staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when our staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the manager and/or other staff back in our setting premises.

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- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone missing.
- One staff member searches the immediate vicinity, but does not search beyond that.
- The senior staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports that child as missing.
- The manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- The manager contacts the parent(s).
- The staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff, or the manager where applicable, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

Procedure to be followed after a child goes missing

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- The manager carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.
- The manager, together with a representative of our management team speaks with the parent(s) and explains the process of the investigation.

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- The parent(s) may also raise a complaint with us or Ofsted.
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the incident.
 - Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.
 - Which staff/children were in the premises/on the outing and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the premises/or on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - What has taken place in the premises or on the outing since the child went missing.
 - The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
 - A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all the staff must co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted are advised.
- The 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.

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- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Setting Managers need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents may 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 Manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the setting Manager 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 a very difficult time. The chairperson or proprietor will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.