

Missing Child

At Incey Winceys Day Nursery and Preschool, the children's safety is always maintained as the highest priority both on and off the premises.

At the setting, children are never left unsupervised and daily risk assessments are carried out to ensure the gates, fences, and doors are securely locked where appropriate (fire exits are unlocked to allow safe exit).

Whilst out of the setting we take measured steps towards ensuring that children remain safe and are always supervised. We risk assess the outing and undertake a pre-visit where possible, we provide high-visibility jackets as appropriate and give each member of staff/ each parent helper a list of contact numbers for those in charge. Usually, we split into smaller groups to allow regular headcounts and easier supervision and meet periodically to ensure each group is accounted for.

The adult: child ratio on outings includes a higher number of adults than is the legal ratio and if needed we encourage parent helpers to increase adult supervision.

Parents' consent is sought for any trip further afield than the local community, and if a parent does not consent to the trip, their child will stay at nursery in another room.

A child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person or other staff will alert the nursery manager, or the person who is in charge.
- The nursery manager or person in charge will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- The register is checked to make sure that no other child is missing or unaccounted for.
- Doors and gates are checked to assess whether there has been a breach of security leading to a child having left the premises.
- Staff ensure they and the other children remain as calm as possible, and that the children are always supervised throughout the search.
- If the child is not found within ten minutes, the child is reported missing to the police and the parent is contacted.

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- The nursery manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this formally.
- The nursery manager carries out a full investigation and will cooperate with the police.

A child goes missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff has taken a small group on an outing, leaving the nursery manager or person in charge back at the nursery premises. If the nursery manager or person in charge has accompanied children and staff on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

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 is unaccounted for. One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.

- The nursery manager is informed immediately, and the incident is reported.
- The nursery manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The setting manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue, or as agreed with the nursery manager. (The nursery is advised as the best place to meet as by the time of the parent arrival, the child may have been returned to the nursery premises).
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- If at an indoor venue or enclosed outdoor venue such as the zoo, the staff will contact the venue's security who will launch a search, and close exits.
- The manager reports the incident and carries out an investigation.
- The nursery manager or designated senior staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive, in which case all police recommendations will be followed.

The Investigation

- The nursery manager speaks with the parents.

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- The management and owner carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all the staff who were present.
- The key person/ staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - the date and time of the report
 - The staff and children who were in the group and the name of the staff member designated responsible for the missing child
 - When the child was last seen in the group
 - What has taken place since the child went missing
 - The estimated time that the child went missing
- Following this, a conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will cooperate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. The LADO may be involved if it seems likely that there was a safeguarding issue to address.
- The incident will be reported under RIDDOR arrangements, and the local Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, OSTED and the LADO is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident on any social networking sites, internet or with the press, unless they are advised to do so by the police or the manager.