



## Whiteley Pre-school Missing child Policy and Procedure

The welfare of the children in our care is paramount and the setting has robust procedures to ensure that the children are safe and secure.

In the event that a child is lost, we will ensure a search is made for the child as soon as possible and that parents and authorities are notified at the appropriate stage. We will also ensure that a high level of care is maintained to other children at the preschool while the following procedures are followed:

### **Child is missing from setting:**

- The person in charge will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden. The toilets, cupboards, kitchen, under tables, playhouse, outdoor play equipment will be checked to ensure that the child is not hiding.
- All remaining children will be gathered together, and the register will be taken. This will also provide confirmation that the missing child was registered into the pre-school.
- Doors will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could have wandered out of the setting.
- Whilst the initial search is made, the supervisor or manager will talk to staff to establish the time of the child's last sighting, the clothes that the child was wearing, and the mental state of the child (happy, upset etc).
- If the child is not found the parent is contacted by the person in charge. The parent will be asked to come to the pre-school, by using the normal route that the child would take and on foot, if possible.
- When the parent arrives at the preschool, and the child is still lost, we will ask the parent to return home and wait in case the child has managed to make their way home.
- The person in charge will remain on site and send another member of staff to carry out a search of the locality, they will take a mobile phone to keep in contact with the setting.
- The missing child is reported to the police.
- Telephone lines will remain as free as possible so that messages are not delayed.
- The preschool activities for the remaining children will continue as normal.

### **Outings:**

If a child goes missing from an outing the following procedures apply:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing gather the remaining children together and a register is taken.
- One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity.

- The manager or supervisor is informed and makes their way to the outing if not in attendance.
- Once the manager / supervisor is in attendance the remaining children are brought safely back to the preschool. If the manager / supervisor is part of the original outing they should decide whether staff are safe to take remaining children back to the preschool without them or whether an additional staff member should come from the preschool to support them.
- The manager or supervisor contacts the parents and agrees where to meet the parent.
- The missing child is reported to the police.
- In the event of a child being lost on an outing to another setting the manager / supervisor should alert officials at the venue for them to aid the search and to take advice.

### **The investigation**

The Manager will inform the chair of the committee and Ofsted at the earliest opportunity.

The trustees of the setting will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all staff and other adults in session / outing at the time.

The manager will write a report detailing the following:

- The date and time of the incident
- The staff and children in attendance
- When the missing child was last seen
- What the child was wearing and any distinguishing features
- The estimated time that the child went missing.
- The circumstances surrounding the disappearance.
- The time parents and police were contacted.
- The outcome – was the child found.

A 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. Social services will be contacted if there is a child protection issue to address.

The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements and is recorded in the incident book; the local health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

The insurance department at the Preschool Learning Alliance is informed.

### **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 management and 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 Manger and / or committee chairperson.

Adopted on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013

Reviewed on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Signed..... Chairperson