



Guidance for Lost Child

Last Review: 21/08/2025

Next Review: 21/08/2026

1.0 Policy Statement

The safety of children is paramount. While the risk of a child going missing is extremely low, we have clear prevention measures and a prompt, co-ordinated response should it occur. We work in partnership with parents and follow statutory guidance, recording and reviewing any incident to prevent recurrence.

2.0 Our Legal Obligations

EYFS Statutory Framework (2025): safeguarding and welfare requirements; supervision, ratios, registers and risk assessment (including outings).

Ofsted registration requirements: notify Ofsted of **serious incidents**, including where a child goes missing on or off the premises (notification within required timescales).

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023): immediate safeguarding action and information sharing where a child may be at risk.

Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974: safe systems of work, secure premises, risk control.

UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018: proportionate, lawful information sharing (including with police/Ofsted/LA) and secure record keeping.

3.0 Procedures

3.1 Prevention (start/end of day and during session)

Parents are made aware of when responsibility transfers at drop-off and collection. Arrival and departure use the intercom and controlled entry; doors remain locked between arrivals. Staff complete registers promptly (morning and afternoon)

and keep attendance/hours up to date. Collection is by a known adult; if another adult will collect, parents must inform the office and provide a password. During the day, children are supervised according to ratios, frequent headcounts are completed (e.g., transitions, outdoor/indoor moves), and gates/doors are checked secure. Contact details are kept current; parents must update any changes immediately.

3.2 Prevention on visits/outings

We complete a written risk assessment, set appropriate staff: child ratios, carry an up-to-date list of children and contacts, and ensure at least one Paediatric First Aider attends with a phone and emergency contacts. Regular headcounts are done (on departure/arrival and at key points).

3.3 If a child is thought to be missing (on the premises)

- Alert and contain: The nearest staff member alerts the Manager immediately. Keep other children safe and supervised; lock/secure exits and assign staff to watch doors/gates.
- Search quickly: Within the first 5 minutes, a coordinated search checks last known location, toilets, cupboards, under furniture, garden, corridors, adjacent rooms and any potential hiding spots.
- Escalate: If not found immediately, the Manager calls 999 (police), then informs parents. Provide the child's description, clothing, last seen location and time. Continue searching as advised by police.
- Record: Start a timed incident log (who, what, where, when, actions taken).

3.4 If a child is thought to be missing (off the premises/outing)

- Secure the group: One adult stays with the group; another leads the search of the immediate area and last known location.
- Call 999 at once (don't wait 5 minutes off-site). Inform the venue/security if applicable.
- Inform the Manager and parents as soon as practicable. Keep following police instructions and maintain supervision of the group.
- Record actions and timings.

3.5 After the child is found / post-incident actions

- Reassure the child and family; offer appropriate support.
- Complete the Incident Report the same day, attach staff statements and the search log, and review the register/headcounts for that session.
- Notify Ofsted as a serious incident within the required timescale. Consider informing the Local Authority (and safeguarding partners) where appropriate.
- Conduct a debrief and risk assessment review (environment, staffing, routines, physical security, arrival/collection process). Implement improvements immediately and brief staff.

- Consider whether the incident raises any safeguarding concerns; if so, the DSL follows local procedures.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Nursery Manager: ensures staff know and follow this policy; oversees registers, entry/exit control and risk assessments; leads the emergency response, communications and notifications; completes the investigation and implements improvements.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): advises during the incident where risk to the child is suspected; leads safeguarding actions and information-sharing with external agencies.

Staff: maintain vigilant supervision; complete registers/headcounts; secure doors/gates; follow search and escalation steps immediately; keep accurate, timed records; and support the post-incident review.

Parents/Carers: provide accurate, up-to-date contact details; follow agreed handover procedures; inform us promptly of alternate collectors and use the password system.