



Safeguarding children

1.7.1 Missing child policy and procedures

Policy statement

At School House Nurseries we ensure that the children in our care are safe at all times. However, we recognise that we must have in place plans of action to deal with every eventuality, however unlikely, including the possibility that a child goes missing.

If a child goes missing, or is suspected missing, when on the premises

Step 1 – A quick and thorough early search

- If a member of staff suspects a child is missing they immediately, but calmly, alert the senior leading the classroom.
- The senior calmly calls out to other staff using the code word “Paddington Bear”, making sure any staff in the outdoor classroom and playground have heard.
- The senior instructs one member of staff to check (in this order):
 - The front door is shut and not on the latch (it should never be).
 - The front gate is shut and not on the latch (it should never be). You’ll need to leave the building and tug on the gate. Have a quick look up and down the road to make sure the child isn’t there. You’ll need to be buzzed back in.
 - The door to the playground is locked.
 - The gate from the playground to the car park is shut and bolted. (This check is not necessary if the door to the playground is locked.)
 - If any of these doors are open, close it, go back and tell the senior, then go search the immediate vicinity around the recently-open door. If you can’t see the child within a couple of minutes, call the police on 999.
- All other staff bring the children in their area into the main classroom and line them up at the door into the toilets for a headcount.
- The senior carries out a headcount, checking against the numbers recorded on the whiteboard.



- If the numbers don't tally, the senior instructs a member of staff to carry out a sweep of the building in the following order:
 - The outdoor classroom (even if the door is locked, as a member of staff may have locked it behind them).
 - The role play room.
 - The toilets (including the adult cubicle).
 - The playground (even if the door to the playground is locked).
 - The Minis' sleep room.
 - The main corridor.
 - The kitchen.
 - The office.

Step 2 – Escalating the search

- If, after the initial search, a child is still missing, the senior takes a register to establish the name of the child.
- The senior sends any staff who are supernumerary to search the local area.
- The senior then contacts:
 - The police by dialing 999.
 - The child's parent carer, asking them to come to the school with a recent picture of the child.
 - Lindy or Stuart (on their mobile), who will come to the setting if they're not already there.
- The senior talks to the staff to establish when and where the child was last seen and records this information on the Missing Child Form in readiness for the police.

If a child goes missing, or is suspected missing, on an outing

- If a member of staff suspects a child is missing they immediately, but calmly, alert the senior in charge of the outing.
- The senior calmly calls out to other staff using the code word "Paddington Bear".
- All staff ask their children to come to them and they carry out a headcount, calling out the number to the senior.
- If the numbers don't tally the senior sends a member of staff to search the immediate vicinity.
- If the name of the missing child isn't immediately obvious, the senior takes a register to establish which child is missing.
- The senior escalates the search by:
 - Informing the venue's staff (if there are any) asking them to carry out a wider search.

- Calling the police by dialling 999.
- Contacting the parents/carers and asking them to go to the setting with a recent photograph of the child. (Call the setting if the parent/carer contacts are not to hand.)
- Calling Lindy or Stuart on their mobiles, who will go to the setting.
- The senior delegates a member of staff to lead the group and to return with the children to the setting. Make sure there are enough staff to safely get the children back – if there aren't, stay where you are and wait for help to arrive.
- The senior continues to co-ordinate the search.

Investigating the incident after the event

- The owners will carry out a full investigation, writing up a detailed incident report that includes:
 - The date and time of the incident.
 - A list of staff and children who were on the outing.
 - The name of the staff designated as responsible for the missing child.
 - Written statements from all the staff on what happened before and after the child went missing.
 - A conclusion on how the incident happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will co-operate fully.
- The owner will report the incident under RIDDOR, recording it in the incident book and informing:
 - All parents/carers.
 - Ofsted.
 - HSE.
 - SPOA.
 - East Sussex Early Years Team.
 - The insurance company.

This policy was updated and reviewed in:

Reviewed date	Name	Signature
September 2015	Stuart Watt	
May 2016	Stuart Watt	
August 2016	Stuart Watt	
September 2016	Stuart Watt	
April 2017	Stuart Watt	
April 2018	Lindy Baldwin	

August 2018	Lindy Baldwin	
April 2019	Lindy Baldwin	
May 2019	Stuart Watt	
January 2020	Stuart Watt	
January 2021	Stuart Watt	
January 2022	Stuart Watt	
March 2023	Stuart Watt	