

MISSING CHILD POLICY

Safeguarding & Welfare Requirements: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

Policy statement

The safety of the children at St Teath Pre-school is of primary consideration at all times. Children attending our setting will be looked after, by caring and vigilant adults, in a safe indoor and outdoor environment.

Aims

Our aim is to keep all children safe by having the following security measures in place:

- The front door is kept locked during sessions and during lunch club
 - Children are only permitted to leave the setting if accompanied by a known and accountable adult
 - Children are supervised by appropriate adults at all times - during outdoor play, the main gate is kept shut and children are supervised
 - A daily record of attendance is maintained for all staff and children attending the setting
 - Visitors to the setting have their identity verified before being permitted to enter the premises, all visitors must record their time of arrival and departure in the visitor's log book
 - Parents are asked to inform their child's key person if their child is particularly adventurous
 - The Pre-school's designated health and safety coordinator regularly conducts checks the setting for potential security risks
 - Every staff member is aware of their responsibility to inform the Manager immediately should they realise a child is missing
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In the unlikely event that we cannot account for a child, our missing child procedure will be implemented immediately.

Procedures - Child Going Missing on the Premises

- Manager informed as soon as it is noticed a child is missing
- Thorough search of premises and outdoor area undertaken by the Manager
- Main door is checked to ensure it is still locked and gate is checked to ensure it is closed in order to ascertain if there has been a breach of security
- Registers taken to ensure all other children can be accounted for
- Parents and police are contacted by the Manager if the child has not been found
- All staff members are questioned by the Manager to establish when and where the child was last seen & details are recorded
- Chairperson is informed of the incident by the Manager
- Investigation is instigated by the Committee

Procedures - Child Going Missing on an Outing

Procedure followed if parents are not in attendance and responsible for their own child:

- Manager informed as soon as it is noticed a child is missing
 - Children to stand in their allocated key person groups and headcounts taken to ensure no other children are unaccounted for
 - Designated member of staff to undertake search of immediate vicinity
 - Parents and police are contacted if child has not been found
 - All staff members are questioned by the Manager to establish when and where the child was last seen & details are recorded
 - Chairperson is informed of the incident by the Manager
 - Manager remains at location for the arrival of parents and police
 - Staff members escort the children back to the setting
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- Investigation is instigated by the Committee

Investigation

- Staff members ensure remaining children are kept calm and offer reassurance
- Manager and representative from Management Committee speak to parents
- Written statements about the incident are taken from all staff by the Committee
- The police may be involved in an investigation

An incident report is written containing the following details:

- Date and time of report
- Names of staff and children in the classroom/group of the missing child
- Name of staff member responsible for the missing child
- Time and location missing child was last accounted for
- Occurrence of events since the child was noticed as missing
- Estimated time child went missing

Outside agency involvement:

- If the incident warrants police investigation, all staff will fully cooperate
 - The police will be in charge of all aspects of the investigation, including staff interviews
 - If there is a possibility that there is a child protection issue, the Children's Social Care team will be involved
 - The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (please refer to the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents Policy)
 - It is likely that the local authority Health and Safety Officer will investigate the incident and decide if there is a case for prosecution
 - Ofsted are informed in the event of disciplinary action being taken against a member of staff
 - The insurance provider is informed of the incident
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Managing People

Incidents involving a missing child are very worrying for all concerned. The Manager will endeavour to keep all concerned parties as calm as possible and will not apportion blame to any individual. The Manager will ensure that staff members under investigation are treated fairly and are offered support.

When dealing with parents, the Manager will be accompanied by a member of the Committee. Under no circumstances will threats or aggression towards staff members by parents be tolerated. In such a case, the police will be called.

Staff members will not discuss the incident in front of the remaining children. However, any questions will be answered in a reassuring and honest manner in order to minimise their anxieties. Adults and children involved in the incident may require support and counselling depending on the severity of the final outcome. The Committee will use their discretion as to what action is deemed appropriate.