



# LOST OR MISSING CHILD POLICY

EYFS: 3.7, 3.63, 3.65

For the purpose of this document the term 'parents' will be used to describe all types of primary caregivers, such as biological and adoptive parents, foster carers and guardians.

This policy has two parts:

- Lost or missing child from the Little Learners setting (Vigo Village Hall)
- Lost or missing child during an outing

## **Lost or missing child from the Little Learners setting (Vigo Village Hall)**

At Little Learners we take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children on the premises. We only release children into the care of individuals who have been authorised by the parent and we have safety systems in place to ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised.

We carry out the following daily procedures to ensure the setting is secure

- Logging each child's arrival and departure times in the register
- Maintaining appropriate staff: child ratios at all times
- Checking doors and windows before the arrival of the children each day
- Checking the alarm on the main entrance after the arrival or departure of any children, staff or visitor
- Ensuring visitors and volunteers are never left alone with children

In the unlikely event of a child going missing from within the nursery setting, we have the following procedure which will be implemented immediately:

- All staff will be aware of the procedure when a child goes missing and will supply information to support the search, e.g. a detailed description of clothing
- The Manager or Deputy Manager will be informed immediately and all staff present will be informed. Some staff will be deployed to start an immediate thorough search of the nursery, followed by a search of the surrounding area, whilst ensuring that some staff remain with the other children so they remain supervised, calm and supported throughout
- The Manager or Deputy Manager will call the police as soon as they believe the child is missing and follow police guidance. The parents/carers of the missing child will also be contacted
- During this period, available staff will be continually searching for the missing child, while other staff maintain as near to normal routine as possible for the rest of the children in the nursery
- The Manager or Deputy Manager will provide a recent photograph of the child to the police and other relevant authorities
- The Manager or Deputy Manager will meet the police and parents, and follow instructions from the police
- In the unlikely event that the child is not found, the nursery will follow the local authority and police procedure

### Lost or missing child during an outing

We take all reasonable steps to ensure children are kept safe while on outings. We assess the risks or hazards that may arise for children and identify steps to remove, minimise and manage those risks and hazards. This includes the consideration of adult to child ratios and carrying out regular head counts of children throughout the duration of any outing or visit.

In the unlikely event of a child going missing while on an outing we will implement the following procedure immediately:

- All staff will be aware of the procedure when a child goes missing and will supply information to support the search, e.g. a detailed description of clothing
- The designated person in charge or most senior member of staff is informed immediately and all staff present will be informed. Some staff will be deployed to start an immediate thorough search of the area, ensuring that all other children remain supervised, calm and supported throughout
- If appropriate, on-site security will also be informed and a description given
- The designated person in charge or most senior member of staff will immediately inform the police
- The designated person in charge or most senior member of staff will then inform the Manager or Deputy Manager, who will contact the child's parents/carers giving details of what has happened. If the whole nursery is on an outing, all contact details will be taken on the trip by the person in charge
- During this period, some staff will be continually searching for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain the safety and welfare of the remaining children
- It will be the responsibility of the designated person in charge or most senior member of staff to allocate staff to:
  - care for the other children and get them back safely to the setting.
  - meet the police
  - continue the search (this may mean contacting relief staff)
- In the unlikely event that the child is not found, the nursery will follow the local authority and police procedure

In addition

- Any incidents will be recorded in writing as soon as practicably possible including the name of the child who was lost, time identified, notification to police, action taken and outcome
- Ofsted will be contacted and informed of any incidents as soon as possible, but within 14 days as per EYFS statutory guidance
- With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the potentially traumatic experience. The Manager will provide this, seeking further support where necessary
- In any cases with media attention staff will not speak to any media representatives
- Post-incident risk assessments will be conducted following any lost or missing child incident to reduce the risk of the situation recurring

<b>This policy was adopted on</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of the nursery</b>	<b>Date for review</b>
<i>19<sup>th</sup> April 2024</i>		<i>19<sup>th</sup> April 2025</i>