

Under Fives Roundabout
Lost Child Policy
Policy No: 1.7.

Last reviewed: March 2010

To be reviewed by: March 2011

Responsible member of staff: Ludmila Stanley

Responsible member of committee:

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.3. Keeping Safe 1.4. Health and well-being	2.2. Parents as partners	3.4. The wider context	

'Lost child' policy

Procedures for when a child leaves the group unaccompanied

Statement of intent

A child should never leave the group unaccompanied, and we have systems in place and work together with parents for the safety of all children in the group. In the best regulated situations, however, accidents can and do happen, and in the event that we cannot find a child who is a member of the Pre-School/Playgroup, we will operate according to the procedure set out below.

1. Systematic search

The group is responsible for the missing child and also for the other children in the group. The remaining children will be gathered into one large group e.g. for a story with an adult while the rest search for the missing child. Depending on numbers, ages and needs of children and total numbers of adults, more than one adult may need to stay with the remaining children; this decision will be made by the most senior member of staff. The register is checked to make sure no other child has gone astray. Without alarming them, the children will be asked whether they have seen the child who is missing, as will all adults, so that we establish who last saw the missing child, when and where. Every room in the building and any accessible outside area will be checked and noted as they are checked. Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security. Other people using the building will be informed and asked to help. If the child has been lost while outside of Roundabout but on the school premises, we will inform the school and ask for their help (712127).

2. Parents

The child's parents will be contacted within 15 minutes (or sooner if there is reason to suspect the child has left the premises) to warn them that the child may be attempting to get home, alarming them as little as possible. If two people are at home, we would ask one to remain at home and the other to set out on the route they would normally take, with mobile phone contact and preferably bringing a recent photo of the child if the preschool does not have one. Otherwise, we would ask the parent to stay at home in case the child turns up, and that parent will be asked the normal route to the preschool. If the child lives within walking distance of the group, one adult should make the journey on foot in order to catch up with the child if possible.

3. Police and Social Services

If the above steps do not locate the child, the police will be called (999) in order to conduct a thorough search as swiftly as possible. This call will be made within 15 minutes or earlier if there is reason to suspect the child as left the premises.

If the police are contacted, the local Social Care department (0345 045 5203) must also be contacted to inform them of the following:

- What systems are in place for preventing such occurrences
- What happened
- What the staff did, at what time and in what order
- Whom the staff informed, and when.

The Social Care team will want to conduct their own investigation.

The Chair of the Management Committee should also be informed as should the PLA Insurance Manager (0207 833 0991, quoting membership no 14094).

4. Accident and Incident book

A record of the event will be made as soon as an adult has time to do so, and even if the child is found safe within a few minutes. This will include the last definite sighting of the child and anything unusual that day about the behavior of that child or of any other children. A review of current risk assessments will be carried out to assess if the incident could reoccur and to ensure anything that can be done to prevent a similar occurrence is immediately put in place.

5. After the incident

A member of staff will be available to discuss with the child's parents the events surrounding the disappearance of the child. The parents will need care and support; however our insurance also requires that we should not imply that we accept liability until the incident has been fully investigated by us and by Social Care. All staff and parents should be asked to refer any enquiries from the media about the incident to the Chair of the Committee for response.

If appropriate, a short meeting will be held at the end of the session or the start of the following session (or a note sent home with the children) to give other parents brief, accurate information about the incident as rapidly as possible and stop rumours circulating.

Ofsted should be informed: 0300 1231231 quoting our setting number EY379489.

6. When the child is found

The child will be reassured and comforted preferably until a parent/carer can be present, when ideally two members of staff and the parent will be able to talk with the child. One of the two staff members should take notes. It should be borne in mind that the child may be unaware of having done anything wrong, or alternatively may also have been afraid and distressed and may now be in need of comfort. Other adults present will take the opportunity to speak to all the children to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises on their own, and why.

Lost Child Procedures on Trips

The procedures are the same as above. In addition:

- 1) The staff will have conducted a risk assessment prior to setting out, including familiarizing themselves with the route to be taken and the layout of the destination and making a visit.
- 2) The senior member of staff will carry the register which includes emergency contact numbers.
- 3) Children are counted regularly.
- 4) There are high (preferably 1:2) adult:child ratios; extra staff, volunteers and parent helpers are included in order to divide the children into smaller groups.
- 5) Staff members will carry the preschool mobile with them.
- 6) Staff members on the trip will have a contact number for the place they are visiting so that an administrator can be informed if a child is missing.

Reviewed December 2009, accepted February 2010

- Mayfield School Office 01223 712127
- PLA Insurance 0207 833 0991

OFSTED 0300 1231231 (state EY379489)

Social Care – Cambridge City Social Care Team No. 0345 045 5203

Office hours 08:45 am to 5.20 pm Monday to Thursday, 8.45 am to 4.25 pm Friday; Out of hours 01733 234724

- Early Years Foundation Stage Adviser Tamsin Bryant 07789032984
- Cambridge Constabulary (non-emergency) No. 0345 456 456 4
- Emergency services (police, ambulance, fire brigade) 999
- Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
<http://www.cambslscb.org.uk>