



1.5 Missing child

Policy statement

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises, every attempt is made, through the implementation of our outings procedure and our exit/entrance procedure, to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing Busy Bee preschool Millbrook's missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures

If a child going missing on the premises the following will happen

- As soon as we are aware that a child is missing the manager is alerted
- The register is checked to make sure all other children are present.
- The manager or deputy manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child may leave the premises
- If the child is not found the manager or deputy manager calls the police immediately and reports the child as missing, if it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this.
- The parent(s)/carers are then called and informed.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The manager or deputy manager will talk to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- If the manager/owner is not on site they will be contacted and informed of the incident, they will come to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation with the deputy manager.
- All remaining children will be cared for and not alerted to the incident, their day will progress as normal if possible, and staff will remain calm and not discuss the incident around the children.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what we do when our staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving our manager or deputy manager with appropriate staff back in our setting premises. If the manager has accompanied children

on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. What happens when a child goes missing from a whole group outing may be a little different, as parents usually attend and are responsible for their own child.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child is missing.
- One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that in order to maintain ratios.
- The senior staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- The manager contacts the parent(s).
- The staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff, or the manager where applicable, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- The owner/manager will carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all the staff and volunteers who were present.
The manager/owner, together with the deputy manager or alternative senior staff member will speak with the parent(s)/carers and explain the process of the investigation.
- The parent(s)/carers may also raise a complaint with us or Ofsted.
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the incident.
 - Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.
 - Which staff/children were in the premises/on the outing and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child ,if outside the setting.
 - When the child was last seen in the premises/or on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - What has taken place in the premises or on the outing since the child went missing.
 - The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted are advised.
- The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned, part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- Our staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child on the outing, they may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- They may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid; our manager will ensure that any staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry, and fraught, they may want to blame our staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at our manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff one of whom is our manager and the other should be our deputy manager or alternative senior staff member. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against our staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them, they too may be worried, the remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them, they should answer children's questions honestly, but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, our staff may need counselling and support, if a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The setting manager/owner will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Our staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.
- Staff must not discuss the incident with other parents, on social media platforms etc as this will be a confidentiality breach

This policy was adopted by	<u>Busy Bee preschool Millbrook</u>	(name of provider)
On	<u>11th July 2018</u>	(date)
Date to be reviewed	<u>11th July 2019</u>	(date)
Signed on behalf of the provider	<hr/>	
Name of signatory	<u>Lisa Floyd</u>	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	<u>Owner/manager</u>	