



Missing Child from Nursery and Outings Policy

Grass Roots Nursery Group: Missing Child Policy

Purpose

To establish clear, legally compliant procedures for addressing incidents of missing children at Grass Roots Nursery Group, ensuring a prompt, coordinated, and effective response that prioritises the child's safety.

Statutory Framework and Legislation

This policy is guided by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (2025):** Specifically the requirements for safeguarding and welfare.
- **Children Act 1989 and 2004:** Establishing the duty of care for children.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023):** Guidelines for inter-agency cooperation.
- **Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR):** Governing the handling of incident records.

Key Principles

- **Immediate Action:** Respond to missing child incidents without delay.
- **Search and Rescue:** Conduct systematic searches to locate the child.
- **Communication:** Maintain clear, honest communication with parents, staff, and relevant authorities.
- **Welfare:** Provide ongoing support and assistance to all individuals involved in the incident.
- **Documentation:** Maintain rigorous and accurate records of the incident and follow-up actions.

Immediate Procedures (On-Site)

1. **Notification:** The staff member who discovers a child is missing must immediately notify the Nursery Manager or Person in Charge.
2. **Staff Deployment:** The Manager will designate specific staff to search the premises while ensuring remaining staff maintain strict supervision ratios for the rest of the children.
3. **Thorough Search:** Conduct a systematic search of all rooms, cupboards, outdoor areas, and the immediate surrounding perimeter.
4. **Police Involvement:** If the child is not found within 10 minutes of the initial discovery, or immediately if there is a suspected abduction, the police must be called via 999.
5. **Parental Contact:** Parents must be notified immediately once it is confirmed the child is missing and the police have been called.

Procedures for Outings and Off-Site Trips

1. **Initial Count:** If a child is noticed missing during an outing, an immediate headcount of the remaining group must be performed.

2. **Venue Security:** Notify the management of the venue (e.g., park team, museum staff) to initiate their lost child protocols.
3. **Stay and Return:** One lead staff member will remain at the site to continue searching and meet emergency services, while the rest of the group is escorted back to the nursery by remaining staff.

External Notifications and Regulatory Reporting

- **Ofsted:** The nursery is legally required to notify Ofsted of any missing child incident as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than 14 days after the incident.
- **LADO:** The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be contacted if the incident suggests a failure in safeguarding or staff supervision.
- **RIDDOR:** If the child suffers an injury during the incident that meets the criteria, a report must be made under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

Documentation and Post-Incident Review

- **Incident Record:** A detailed written report must be completed, including the time of discovery, names of staff involved, the search timeline, and the final outcome.
- **Risk Assessment:** Following the incident, the nursery will conduct a formal review of its security measures and risk assessments to prevent recurrence.
- **Wellbeing Support:** Post-incident support and debriefing will be provided to the child, the parents, and staff members.

Staff Training and Readiness

- **Emergency Drills:** The nursery will conduct regular "Missing Child" drills (at least once per term) to practice these procedures.
- **Induction:** All new staff will be trained on this policy as part of their initial induction.
- **Security Reviews:** Management will conduct monthly reviews of gates, locks, and sign-in/out procedures.

By implementing this revised policy, Grass Roots Nursery Group ensures a prompt, effective, and legally compliant response to missing child incidents, protecting the safety and well-being of all children in our care.