



We demonstrate tolerance and respect through child-led play

Missing Child Policy

Contents

| | | |
|---|----------------------|---|
| 1 | Scope & Purpose..... | 1 |
| 2 | Outline..... | 2 |



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Missing Child Policy

1 Scope & Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure the safety of all children who attend Croft Playgroup.
- 1.2 To ensure that we are able to find any child that goes missing either in Playgroup or on an activity outside of Playgroup as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- 1.3 To communicate effectively and to an appropriate timescale with everyone concerned.
- 1.4 To follow up incidents and to review procedures accordingly.

2 Outline

2.1 Policy statement

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

All members of staff should be aware of what to do if a child is lost whilst in our care at the Playgroup. Please note that in the absence of the Manager the Deputy must assume the role.

Please note that prevention is vital. Losing a child is an extremely serious issue and you are responsible at all times for every child in your care.

If you lose a child in your care you could well be held personally liable.

Every precaution must be taken to avoid or prevent a child disappearing, being taken by an unauthorised person or running away whilst in your care.

Keep registers, signing in/out sheets etc up to date.

Know which children are attending each session and record on the signing in and out sheets.

Follow the procedure for outings/visits in the outings policy.

If a child is lost inform the Manager or member of staff in charge immediately.



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POLICE WILL BE CALLED AND PARENTS INFORMED AFTER 10 MINUTES OF SEARCHING FOR A MISSING CHILD.

The Manager or member of staff in charge must: -

If not in a contained area, i.e. outside the pre-school garden, in the park etc, inform the local police immediately.

If in a contained area, i.e. a zoo, a museum etc, inform the management immediately. If necessary and after consultation with the Management inform the local police.

Without compromising the safety of any person dispatch a member of staff to help locate the child. The member of staff should take a mobile phone and a meeting time and place arranged.

If after an initial search has proved unsuccessful, the parents/carers must be contacted. The emergency contact numbers must be used if the parents/carers cannot be contacted.

If the child has been lost away from the Playgroup premises the trip must be abandoned and `everyone` returned to the Playgroup as quickly and safely as possible.

It may be necessary for a senior member of staff to remain at a location that is away from the Playgroup, to help with the search. This person must have a mobile phone and keep the Playgroup Manager up to date at all times.

The Manager must remain in constant contact with the parents/carers and any agencies or people involved in the search for the child. He/she must co-operate fully and give full support at all times.

The committee must be informed immediately and if practical attend the location.

The Manager must follow the child's case and offer help and support to both any outside agencies and the parent's / carers.

Never: -

Leave a child unattended.

Allow a child to leave the Playgroup with any person other than the named people on the child's details form.

2.2 Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the Playgroup manager. The Playgroup manager calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.

A designated staff member will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.



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The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.

Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.

The Playgroup Manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.

The Playgroup Manager contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management committee where applicable.

2.3 Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the setting manager and/or other staff back in the setting. If the setting manager has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

What to do when a child goes missing from a whole setting 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, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.

The Playgroup or manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident recorded.

The Playgroup manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing immediately.

The playgroup manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting.

Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.

In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.

The setting leader contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management and committee where applicable.

The setting leader, or a member of staff may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.



We demonstrate tolerance and respect through child-led play

2.4 The investigation

Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The setting manager together with the chairperson or representative from the management committee or owner, speaks with the parent(s).

The chairperson, carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.

The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
The date and time of the report.

What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.

When the child was last seen in the group/outing.

What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.

The time it is estimated that the child went missing.

A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.

If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, OFSTED is informed.

The insurance provider is informed.

2.5 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.

The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for 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.

Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Setting leaders need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.



We demonstrate tolerance and respect through child-led play

The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the setting leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the setting leader and the other should be the chairperson of the management committee or representative, or the proprietor. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against 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, 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 chairperson or proprietor will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

After any incident of a missing child. Even if the child is located within the building. Ofsted and the Lado must be notified verbally within 24 hours and in writing within 14 days

This policy was adopted by Croft Playgroup

Signed on behalf of the Croft Playgroup

Croft Playgroup Committee

Croft Playgroup Manager

Print Name: Katherine Chan

Print Name: Michelle Barrow, Helen Dearlove

Signed.....

Signed.....

Dated.....

Dated.....

Date policy to be reviewed: March 2024 or earlier if required