



Lost Child Policy

Children's safety is of paramount concern to West Byfleet Nursery. In the event that a child becomes lost while in the care of the nursery, the nursery will implement the following procedures. These ensure that a systematic approach to finding the child is taken, whilst other children in the nursery are kept safe and calm.

In the event that a child is missing, we will instigate an immediate search for the child, notify parents and authorities at the appropriate stage and maintain a high level of care for other children in the nursery.

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the register should be checked to confirm that the child was in the nursery for that session and/or they have not been collected early. Once confirmed the Nursery Managers must be informed. The managers will then inform staff of the situation in a calm rational manner. Staff may need to be re-deployed to ensure the safeguarding and welfare requirements are maintained whilst a search is carried out. This deployment will be initiated at the Managers discretion with the aim of ensuring that all the remaining children on the premises are safe and settled.

The Managers / Room leaders will carry out an initial search of the Nursery and grounds. This will include checking:

- Doors, windows, and gates for a potential breach of security
- Classrooms and outdoor play areas
- All toilet areas
- Sheds and other storage areas
- In and around garden play equipment and den areas
- All indoor cupboards and home corners
- Under seating, desks, and counter areas
- Staff room and staff toilet area

If the child is found, the managers will write an incident form detailing staff names involved in the incident and will contact the parents and Ofsted to inform them of the incident. A full risk assessment will be carried out to ensure the incident is not repeated.

If the child is not found the Managers will then send a member of staff and any extra helpers available to search for the child. The Managers should contact the infant school to ask for assistance in searching in and around the infant school. They will remain in contact with the nursery using mobile phones.

The search should start with:

- Checking up and down the access routes to the nursery and checking Camphill Road.
- Checking the grounds, especially the school field, under and around parked cars etc.

- The search should be completed as thoroughly and as quickly as possible, before reporting back to the Managers.
- If the child is not found immediately, a designated member of staff will phone 999 and request police services, report the child as missing and follow their advice.

While the extended search is being made, the Managers should establish from staff and/or visitors when the child was last seen, what they were wearing and their emotional state (happy, upset etc) and record this information.

The Managers should contact the parents/carers and report the situation. The parents/carers should be asked to come to the nursery by the normal route the child would take, preferably by walking. If the child is still missing when the parents arrive at the nursery, police advice should be followed. Telephone lines should be kept as free as possible so that important information is not delayed.

Nursery activities for the other children will continue as normal, with staff not involved in the search giving them their full attention, keeping the atmosphere as calm as possible.

The Investigation:

The Directors will carry out a full investigation.

The Managers must write an incident report detailing:

- The date & time of the incident
- Which staff, children, other adults were present
- When and where the child was last seen
- Action taken to find the child.
- What has taken place since then.

A conclusion should be drawn as to how the incident occurred. A risk assessment should occur to minimise the risks of an incident of this nature occurring again.

The incident should be reported in accordance with HSE guidance and must be recorded in the setting's Safeguarding file.

The local authority Health and Safety Officer may also wish to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

OFSTED must be informed in any event of a lost or missing child regardless of the outcome as soon as possible but no more than 14 days after the incident. Ofsted must be informed in writing.

The Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) must also be contacted. 0300 123 1650 option 3.

If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff must co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff.

Social Services may also be involved if it seems likely that there will be a child protection issue to address.

Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. West Byfleet Nursery staff will endeavour to keep all children and any other adults on the premises safe and as calm as possible.

Parents may be distraught, angry, and distressed. Parents will be supported by two members of staff during this distressing time. Children may also be worried and may seek reassurance.

Depending on the severity of the final outcome, staff and children may need additional support or counselling and the Directors should use their discretion to decide what action to take.

Signed: Ruth Claydon Date: 13th November 2023 Next Review: October 2024