



Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Missing child

Policy statement

Children's safety is our highest priority. We are proactive in our approach to prevent children from going missing. Children are frequently taught about our preventative measures which include staying within perimeter markers (approximately 30 metres), staff and children wearing high visibility clothing, group recall strategies such as 1,2,3 where are you and whistles to be blown in an emergency situation, all children and staff have a personal whistle attached to their clothing, staff are allocated a group of children to keep a head count of, children will be supervised more closely depending on age and ability and staff ratios will exceed the minimum standard.

Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our safeguarding and 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.

Procedures

Child going missing in the woods

- As soon as it is discovered, that the Head Count at any particular moment, does not agree with that recorded at the start of that session, the situation will be taken very seriously.
- If an immediate recount still shows a shortfall, all activities will be suspended and "1, 2, 3, where are you?" will be used to rally all group members (The 1,2,3 where are you recall will be practiced with children in a similar way to how a fire drill is practiced) . If the missing child does not immediately appear then staff will blow a whistle. Children are taught to blow their personal whistle (that is attached to their jacket) when they hear the staff whistles and to make their way back to the main fire circle. Children are also taught to blow their whistle and remain where they are if they feel that they are lost.
- An immediate assessment of the last known sighting and any possible places the child might be will be undertaken. The most senior member of staff will assume responsibility as the search co-ordinator.
- One adult will be released for a five minute search of the immediate area, whilst another adult occupies the remaining children with a game/song or story. The main aim is to prevent anxiety escalating amongst the children. The adult will continue to blow the whistle and listen for a response.
- If the five minute search does not discover the missing child/ or children, staff will take the group back to the main site, retracing the paths taken earlier. One adult will stay in the area to look, contact will be maintained by mobile phone. Children should not be involved in the search.

- The search co-ordinator will telephone Frylands wood main site phone to inform them of the situation and to request support from the Frylands team in finding the child / children.
- If the child is not located after an extensive search and within 15 minutes of the initial search the police will be contacted in liaison with the search co-ordinator. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this.
- The parents will then be contacted by telephone to inform them of the situation.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing are given to the police.
The manager talks to our staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The owner comes to the provision immediately to carry out an investigation, with our management team.

The investigation

- Ofsted and Croydon LA are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- The owner, carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.
- Our manager, together with Jack Scrivens speaks with the parent(s) and explains the process of the investigation.
- The parent(s) 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.
 - 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 incident occurred.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff 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.
- The parents may feel angry, and fraught. 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 owner. 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. Our 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. Our owner will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

This policy was adopted by

The Woodshed

On

August 2018

Date to be reviewed

August 2019

Signed on behalf of the provider

J Srivens

Name of signatory

Jack Scrivens

Role of signatory

Owner