



Missing Child Policy

St Helen's Pre-School take the safety of children very seriously and will take every precaution necessary to ensure that the children in their care do not leave a session unaccompanied. The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is soon discovered. Staff will undertake periodic head counts using the register forms. If, in the event of a member of staff not being able to account for a child's whereabouts, the following action will be taken:

Procedures

If a Child goes missing on the Premises

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing from the Pre-School the staff will notify the manager who will:

- carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- check the register to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- check all doors and gates to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- talk to the staff to establish when and where the child was last seen.
- call the police if the child is still not found to report the child as missing and then call the parent.
- contact the Chairperson of St Helen's Committee to report the incident, and start proceedings to carry out an immediate investigation
See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further details on our security procedures.

Preparing for an Outing

St Helen's Pre-School considers a number of issues prior to and during outings off the premises:

- A risk assessment will always be carried out based on the journey to the venue as well as on the suitability of the venue itself. A senior member of staff will take a mobile phone, as well as a first aid kit on the outing.
- Ratios: If not with their parents, children will always be given a designated person who will stay with the child for the duration of the outing. Our ratios change to 1:2 staff to children for outings.
- A register of the children attending the outing will be taken by the supervisor or manager and a head count will be carried out on reaching and leaving the venue.

Aim of Policy

The safety of the children in our care is St Helen's Pre-School's highest priority at all times, both on and off premises. Every attempt is made to ensure the security of the

children is maintained at all times through our entrance/exit procedures, outings procedures and the awareness and vigilance of our staff. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, the following procedures will be adopted.

If a Child goes missing during an outing (off the Premises)

The following actions describe what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the manager and/or other staff back at the Pre-school. If the manager/s has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. Should a child go missing from a whole setting outing procedures 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 person 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 manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing); she will go on to contact the police immediately to report the child as missing.
- The manager may be advised by the police to stay at the Pre-school or go to the venue until they arrive.
- The manager will contact the child's parent who may make their way to the venue or Pre-School as agreed dependent on the circumstances.
- Staff will take the remaining children back to the setting.
- If at an indoor venue, the staff will contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The manager will contact the Chairperson to report the incident. If the Chair is not contactable, the manager will go through the contact list of Committee Member until one is available. The Chair will come to the Pre-School immediately to carry out an investigation with the manager/s.

The Investigation

Should such a situation of a missing child occur on or off the premises, all staff are advised to keep calm for the safety and security of the other children present so as not to let them become anxious or worried. The manager, together with the Chair or other representative from the Committee will speak with the parent(s). The Chair will carry out a full investigation by taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing. The original reporting staff member will write an incident report detailing:

- The date and time of the report.
- Which 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 - 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. Other relevant authorities will need to be involved, such as: the NSCB, or Norfolk Safeguarding Children’s Board if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address; or the Local Authority Health and Safety Officer who may decide if there is a case for prosecution.

The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements and is recorded on a St Helen’s Pre-School Incident Form.

St Helen’s Pre-school understands that Ofsted must be informed of any such incidents, as well as our insurance provider.

Other Related Policies & Procedures

The following policies provide additional information:

- Outings Policy
- Reporting of Accidents and Incidents Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

This policy has been adopted by St Helen’s Pre-School

Signed on behalf of the setting by:

.....Chairperson on behalf of St Helen’s Committee

..... Manager

Date: April 2017

Review Date: April 2018