



Lost & Missing Child Policy

Policy Name:	Lost & Missing Child Policy
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1. Policy Overview

At Fledgelings Day Nursery, we aim to always protect and support the welfare of children in our care. The Nursery Manager is responsible for ensuring that all staff, students and relief staff receive information on health and safety policies and procedures so that children are suitably supervised.

The guidance in this policy details the necessary actions to be taken in the event of a child being lost and/or missing within the nursery or during an off-site visit.

All "Manager" responsibilities and actions referred to throughout the policy would usually be undertaken by the most senior person in charge, in the absence of the Nursery Manager.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1** Staff must accurately record the arrival and departure times of all children on the FAMILY app as soon as a child arrives or leaves the nursery. Staff must also record children transitioning in and out of different rooms within the nursery on the app using the headcount process.
- 2.2** Managers are responsible for ensuring they spot-check each of their rooms using the app.
- 2.3** Headcounts should be completed and communicated every time there is a transition of a child to a different location or to the garden.
- 2.4** Changes to the group may include:
 - A child arrives or leaves the nursery.
 - A child arrives or leaves the room on a settling-in session.
 - A child arrives or leaves the room when visiting from another room.
 - The group moves, e.g. between the inside and outside area in settings where free-flow play is not possible.
 - Rooms join together.

3. Supervision of Children

- 3.1** Staff must always be vigilant and aware of the location of all children, including during free-flow play.
- 3.2** Wherever possible, children will be within sight and hearing of staff. However, they must always be within sight or hearing.
- 3.3** A child or group of children must never be left unsupervised.
- 3.4** Supervision must always be active. Staff must move through areas with the children, engage and interact with children, and be effectively deployed.
- 3.5** When a member of staff is required to complete a task which will momentarily take them away from the main group of children, e.g. taking a child to the toilet, they must communicate this to other team members, who must ensure that supervision and deployment is adapted accordingly.

- 3.6** If a child or children are leaving the room with them, e.g. for nappy changing, this must also be communicated.
- 3.7** When entering and leaving a room, staff must sign themselves in and out of their room via the FAMILY app. Visitors spending time in the room must also sign in and out using the visitors and staff electronic iPad in the setting lobby area.

4. Collection and Arrival Time

- 4.1** Staff must be particularly vigilant when parents/carers are dropping off and collecting their children.
- 4.2** Each arrival and departure must be accompanied by a handover between the parent and a member of staff. This must take place within the room or the outside area and must not occur in an open doorway.
- 4.3** When parents/carers leave the room after dropping off or picking up their child, the exit point must be supervised by a member of staff to ensure that this is secure and that a child does not follow the parents/carers out of the room.

5. Deployment of Staff

- 5.1** Staff-to-child ratios, as stated by Ofsted guidelines, are maintained across the building.
- 5.2** Staff must be deployed effectively throughout the rooms and the outside areas. Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all individual children to ensure their safety, and deployment arrangements must be communicated effectively and promptly.

Exceptionally, and where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, changes to the ratio may be made in line with the Statutory Framework guidance.

6. Procedures

In the event of identifying that a child is lost or missing within the nursery, the following procedure must be implemented immediately.

- 6.1** All staff within the room/area must be notified, the FAMILY app must be checked to ensure the child should still be present, and the Manager must be notified without delay.
- 6.2** The remaining children within the room/area must be safely grouped with adequate staff to supervise the children effectively.
- 6.3** The remaining staff must conduct a full search of the nursery both indoors and outdoors, including places where a child could be hiding or locked in. This search should be coordinated by a member of the management team. Exits must be manned.
- 6.4** If child is located:
 - 6.4.1** Staff members must check the child to ensure they are not hurt or injured.
 - 6.4.2** The Manager must inform the Area Manager as soon as possible after the incident.

- 6.4.3** The Manager must contact the parent/carer of the child and inform them of the incident. A Serious Incident Report (Appendix 1) must be completed, and the Manager must ensure parents are happy with the findings.
- 6.4.4** The Serious Incident Report (Appendix 1) must be completed and sent to the Area Manager within 48 hours, who will agree any necessary actions and notifications required.
- 6.4.5** Risk assessments must be reviewed and amended where needed.
- 6.5** If a child is not located:
- 6.5.1** If the child is not located after the initial thorough search, the Manager must contact the Police and follow any advice given. The following information will be required:
- Address and contact number of the nursery.
 - Name of child.
 - Detailed description of child, including age, sex and details of their clothing.
 - The next of kin of the child.
 - The circumstances of the incident, including anything that may have triggered the disappearance.
 - How long they have been missing and where they were last seen.
 - Who is looking for the child.
- 6.5.2** Staff must continue to search unless advised otherwise by the Police.
- Refer any media enquiries to the Director (Salma Khodabaksh) should the incident become public.
 - Ofsted will be contacted and informed of the incident.
 - With incidents of this nature, parents, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary.
 - In any cases with media attention, staff will not speak to any media representatives.
 - Post-incident risk assessments will be conducted following any incident of this nature to reduce the chance of recurrence.
- 6.6** Child lost off-site
- In the event of a child going missing or being lost while on an outing, the following procedure must be implemented immediately.
- 6.6.1** All staff on the outing must be informed immediately and, whilst undertaking a search, the Excursion Coordinator must contact the nursery and inform the Manager of the name of the missing child and the exact location and time of the incident.
- 6.6.2** The remaining children on the outing must be safely grouped and effectively supervised.
- 6.6.3** The Manager must coordinate effective deployment of staff within the nursery and deploy a senior staff member to the location to assist in the search. A second mobile phone must be taken to ensure contact can be made.

6.7 If child is located off-site:

6.7.1 Staff must check the child to ensure they are not hurt or injured and inform the Manager that the child has been found.

6.7.2 The senior staff member should continue to the location to provide support to the staff and assist in their safe return to the nursery.

6.7.3 The Manager must inform the Area Manager as soon as possible after the incident, who will agree any necessary actions and notifications required.

6.7.4 The Manager should inform the parents/carers, and they should be invited to a meeting to discuss any actions agreed with the support of the Area Manager.

6.7.5 A Serious Incident Report (Appendix 1) must also be completed and sent to the Area Manager within 48 hours, who will agree any necessary actions and notifications required.

6.7.6 Risk assessments must be reviewed and amended.

6.8 If a child is not located off-site:

6.8.1 If the child is not located after the initial thorough search, the Manager must contact the Police. The Outing Leader must continue to coordinate the search unless advised otherwise by the Police. The following information will be required:

- Address and contact number of the nursery.
- Exact location of the incident.
- Name of child.
- Detailed description of child, including age, sex and details of their clothing.
- The next of kin of the child.
- The circumstances of the incident.
- How long they have been missing and where they were last seen.
- Who is looking for the child.
- The Manager must follow any advice given by the Police.
- Ofsted will be contacted and informed of the incident.
- With incidents of this nature, parents, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary.
- In any cases with media attention, staff will not speak to any media representatives.
- Post-incident risk assessments will be conducted following any incident of this nature to reduce the chance of recurrence.

7. Appendices

Appendix	Description
1.	Serious Incident Report